

# MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

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## THE RED CROSS OF MERCY

What a Woman Can Do When  
Her Country Goes to War

By J. W. McConaughy



AMERICAN RED CROSS WORKERS IN NEW ROCHELLE, NEW YORK, PACKING SUPPLIES FOR A MILITARY HOSPITAL

ONE day last summer, when the Mexican annoyance looked for the fifty-seventh time as if it might flare out in blood and fire, an earnest and patriotic young woman presented herself at a Red Cross recruiting-station. She had a more than comfortable home, a faculty of imagination, and a desire to do useful work without glory and without reward.

"I want to volunteer as a nurse," she

said to the businesslike man to whom she was directed.

He looked her over with the eye of an efficiency expert and pulled a pad of paper toward him.

"Where did you graduate?" he demanded.

"From Radcliffe," she replied.

He looked puzzled, and his pencil hung uncertainly above the paper.

"Radcliffe?" he frowned. "I don't

seem to know that hospital. Where is it?"

"Hospital!" exclaimed the young lady indignantly. "Why, I am talking about Radcliffe College!"

The Red Cross man sighed, laid down

Cross examination, before you can be a Red Cross nurse."

The young lady did not know, and she was grievously disappointed. The verdict, as delivered, meant that several wars might be entirely fought out before



MISSIONARY WORK FOR THE AMERICAN RED CROSS—WOMEN MEETING THE TRAINS AT SCARSDALE, NEW YORK, TO ENROLL NEW MEMBERS AND COLLECT SUBSCRIPTIONS

the pencil, and ran his fingers through his gray hair.

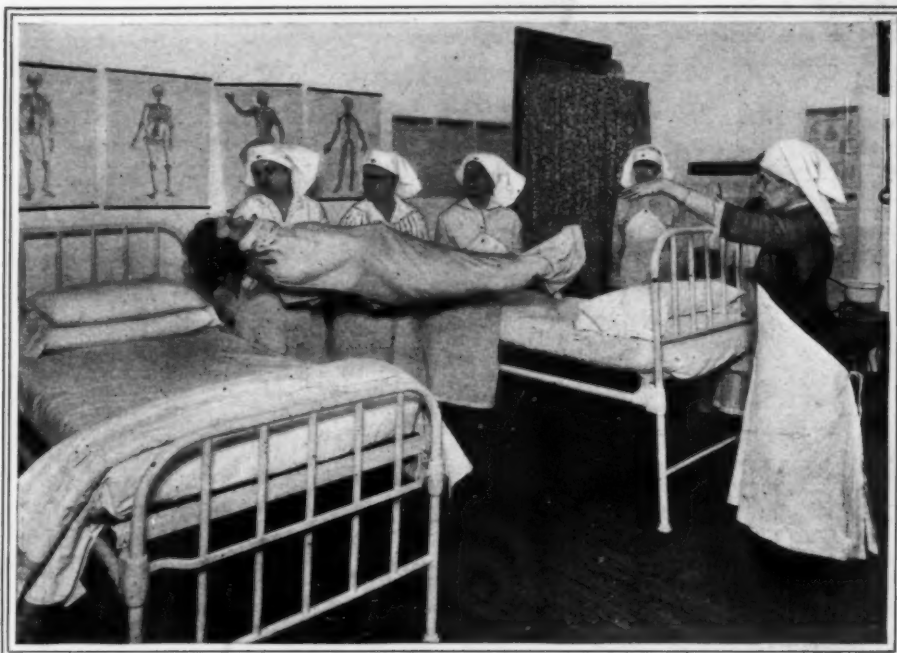
"You don't understand," he said wearily. "I am not interested in your college training. You know, of course, that you have to serve three years in a recognized training-school for nurses, graduate from that school, and then pass a special Red

she could even qualify to appear before the Red Cross examiners. Her dream of enduring hardship and discomfort without complaint, and serving obscurely but usefully in the terrible work of tending the wounded, was destroyed.

Twenty-five years ago this young lady might have swept haughtily out of the

NOTE—Most of the illustrations accompanying this article are from photographs by Brown Brothers, New York.





A COURSE OF PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION FOR MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS AT A RED CROSS STATION ON UPPER BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY



SHOWING MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS HOW TO REMOVE AND REPLACE BEDCLOTHES WITH THE LEAST POSSIBLE AMOUNT OF DISTURBANCE TO THE PATIENT



MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS MEETING IN A GARDEN AT SCARSDALE, NEW YORK, TO WORK AT PREPARING BANDAGES AND OTHER SUPPLIES FOR  
A MILITARY HOSPITAL



AN INDOOR MEETING OF THE SCARSDALE CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS—MEMBERS RECEIVING INSTRUCTION IN ANATOMY, AS A PREPARATION FOR FIRST AID WORK

office with her conscience clear. She had offered her services to an ungrateful republic, and the said services had been rejected by an unfeeling brute who did not understand the need of woman's min-

ments in applying the Sermon on the Mount to the every-day relations of mankind, there was a sort of feeling that the desire to aid in the work necessarily connoted the power to do so. The idea was



AN AMERICAN RED CROSS STATION IN NEW YORK CITY, WHERE HOSPITAL SUPPLIES ARE RECEIVED, STORED, AND SHIPPED FOR USE BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD

istrations to suffering men. Or, more probably, she would have been accepted in some sort of hit-or-miss fashion, and, alight with the fire of sacrifice, would have worked herself to a shadow in making a ghastly mess of some more or less technical job.

But in recent years this has materially changed. When men and women of education first began trying practical experi-

ments in applying the Sermon on the Mount to the every-day relations of mankind, there was a sort of feeling that the desire to aid in the work necessarily connoted the power to do so. The idea was

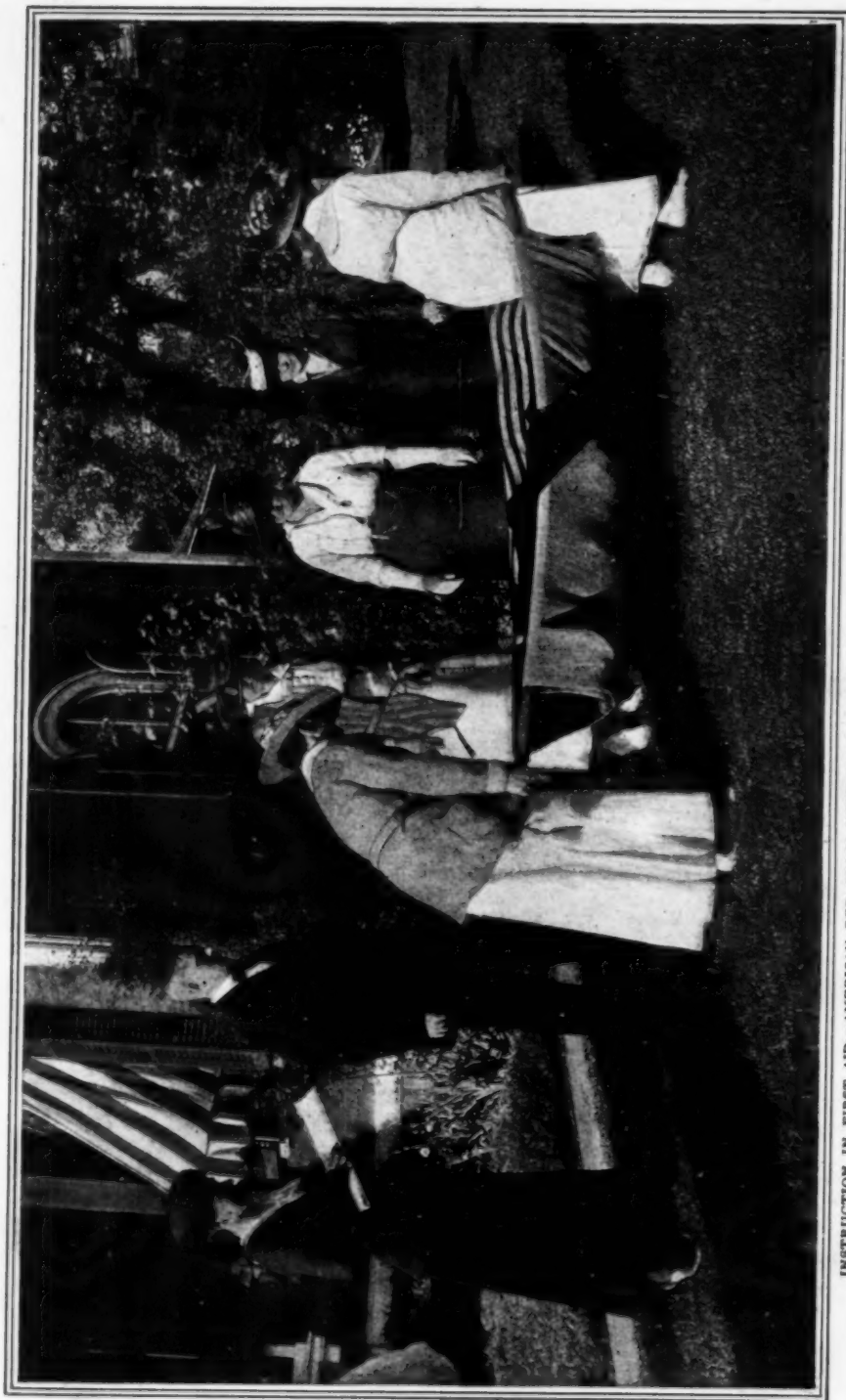
that if any one possessed a sincere willingness to make sacrifices for the good of humanity in any direction, it must inevitably be coupled up with the ability to render skilled and useful service in the field selected.

Much unpleasant experience has exploded this theory. To-day, when you offer to hold out a hand to a group of suffering brothers, some one who has been

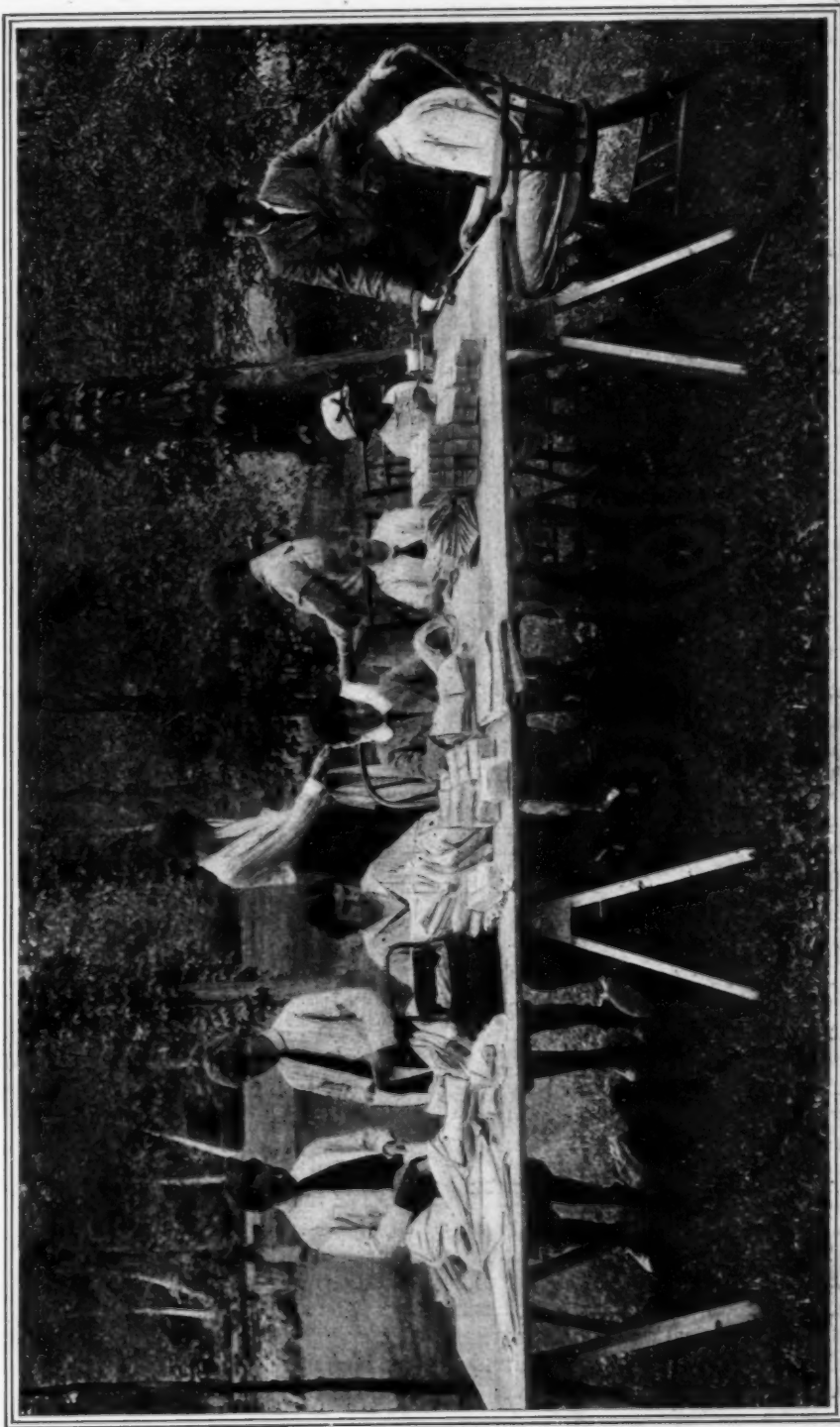


A MEETING OF THE WOMEN OF AN AMERICAN RED CROSS CHAPTER AT NORWALK, CONNECTICUT, TO RECEIVE PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION IN BANDAGING AND FIRST AID TO THE INJURED





INSTRUCTION IN FIRST AID—AMERICAN RED CROSS MEMBERS OF YONKERS, NEW YORK, LEARNING TO ACT AS STRETCHER-BEARERS



BOYS AND GIRLS CAN DO USEFUL SERVICE IN PREPARING MILITARY HOSPITAL SUPPLIES—A WORKING PARTY OF YOUTHFUL RED CROSS MEMBERS AT SCARSDALE, NEW YORK



A DOCTOR GIVING RED CROSS MEMBERS AT SCARSDALE, NEW YORK, A LESSON IN BANDAGING

doing it for a decade rises to ask you if you know which hand to hold out, and precisely at what angle the hand should be held in order to get the best results for the effort expended. If you announce that you are going to serve mankind, some one immediately asks what your equipment consists of, and points out that if you have nothing wherewith to serve, your service won't amount to much.

#### A WIDE FIELD OF USEFUL SERVICE

The young lady who wanted to be a Red Cross nurse collided with this accumulated experience. But the recruiting gentleman, seeing that her disappointment was of the practical and not the romantic kind, explained to her that while nursing was a closed career so far as she was con-

cerned, a wide field of usefulness was still open. He explained that between the distant cities of the republic and the beds in the field base-hospital there might readily be work for twenty-five or thirty women, to keep the nurse at the bedside supplied with things that were absolutely essential to her work.

He told her about the need for comfort-bags, about the ever-increasing, never-ceasing cry for bandages and lint pads as the wounded come back from the front, and about the thousand and one other things that must be provided by hundreds of thousands of hands and forwarded to the hospitals and the trenches. He explained to her that with ordinary intelligence and energy, and a little training, she could help to supply these things.



A RED CROSS REFRESHMENT STATION AT YONKERS, NEW YORK, FOR SOLDIERS PASSING THROUGH THE TOWN DURING THE MOBILIZATION IN JULY LAST

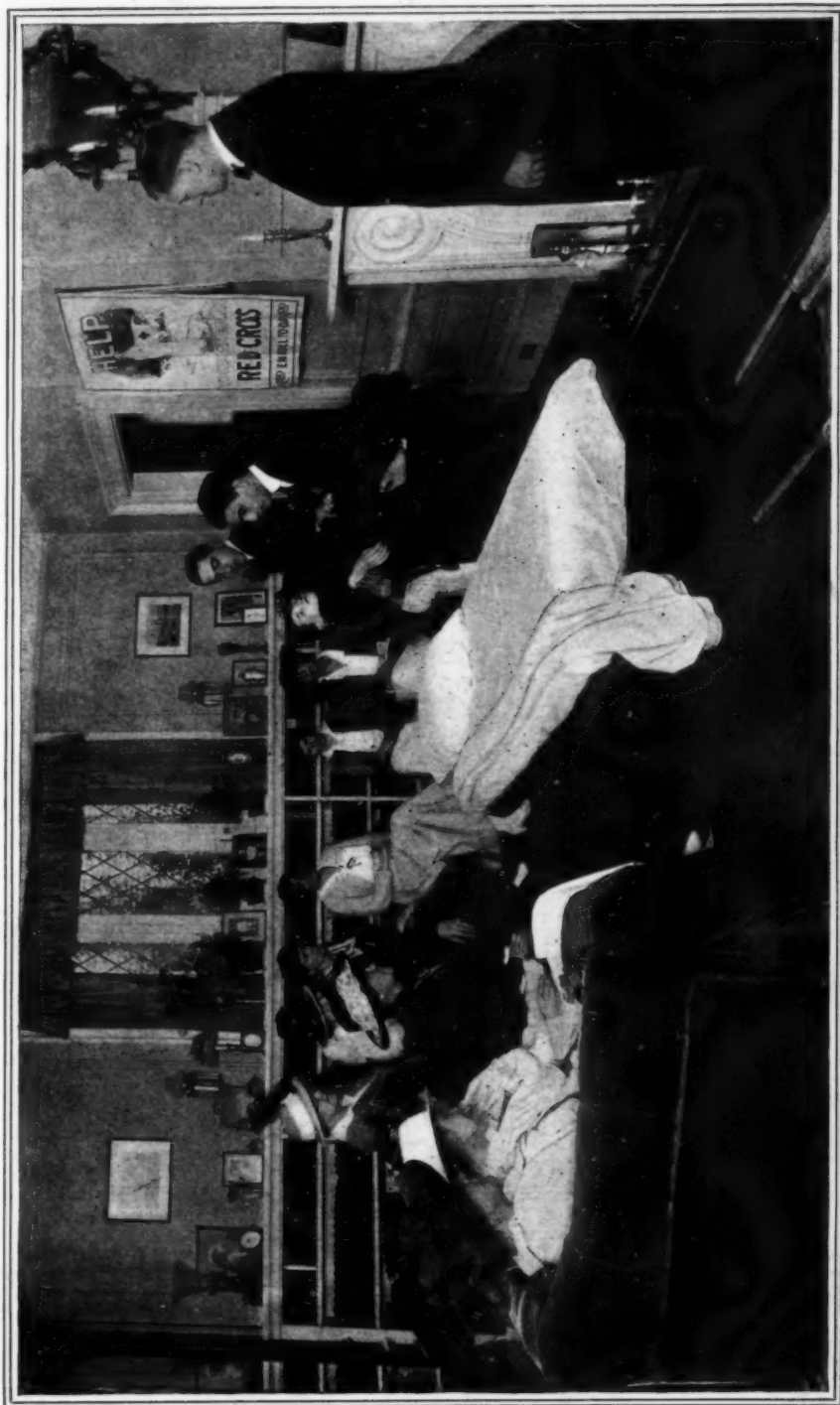


A LAWN MEETING OF AMERICAN RED CROSS MEMBERS AT A PRIVATE RESIDENCE IN YONKERS, NEW YORK—THOUSANDS OF SIMILAR MEETINGS WERE HELD ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES DURING LAST SUMMER, AND A VAST AMOUNT OF WORK WAS DONE



THE WINDOW DISPLAY OF AN AMERICAN RED CROSS CHAPTER AT WACO, TEXAS, WITH DUMMY FIGURES AND SAMPLES OF RED CROSS SUPPLIES, DURING A RECENT CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENROLMENT OF NEW MEMBERS





THE LIBRARY OF A RESIDENCE IN YONKERS, NEW YORK, USED FOR A DEMONSTRATION OF HOSPITAL WORK FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF AMERICAN  
RED CROSS MEMBERS

With a natural aptitude, with courage and strength, and with some months of preparatory work, she might even qualify as a nurse's helper.

before the willing worker can do useful work. The training of the individual and the organization of the whole, personal skill and general cohesion, he pointed out,



AMERICAN RED CROSS MEMBERS AT THE DOORWAY OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF NEW ROCHELLE, NEW YORK, WHERE WEEKLY CLASSES ARE HELD

But in everything and in all directions there ran through his lecture the one motif—training. Even in the making of a comfort-bag or in the rolling of a bandage there is technique which must be learned

were necessary in all useful service in war and peace—and particularly in Red Cross activities.

He might have gone further and told her that she and her own country were



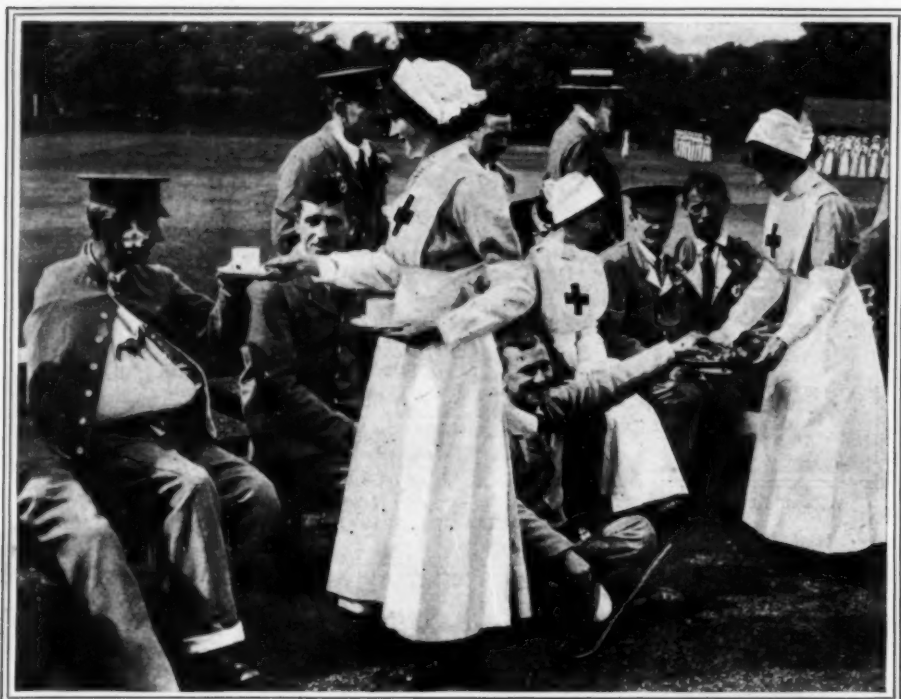
WOMEN'S WORK FOR THE VICTIMS OF REAL WAR—A SCENE IN THE AMERICAN HOSPITAL AT NEUILLY, A SUBURB OF PARIS



RED CROSS NURSES DRESSING A FRENCH SOLDIER'S WOUNDED ARM IN THE AMERICAN HOSPITAL AT NEUILLY

not alone in these feverish outbursts of meaningless energy when war comes upon a people—especially a people who are inherently organized for peace, and peace alone. Even in Germany, where for forty years there has been the dogma that war

being the summer vacation period—and installed beds and other hospital equipment. They were terribly grieved when the army medical men came along and told them they might as well move the benches back in—that their hospital was



RED CROSS NURSES WAITING ON CONVALESCENT BRITISH SOLDIERS AT A GARDEN FÊTE IN ENGLAND

must be the nation's stepping-stone to a great future, there was many a slip-up. In the campaign against the Suez Canal, a German surgeon at a field-hospital in the desert is said to have opened a case of surgical instruments to find that it contained microscopes and gynecological tools, none of which was of any especial use in treating shrapnel wounds.

And in England, when the day of Armageddon came, every woman of means with a large house was full of plans for organizing a hospital of her own and taking care of an interesting group of wounded officers. In one little town near London the good women moved all the benches out of a large schoolhouse—it

so full of ineradicable technical faults that there was no time to fool with it.

Even in the entirely commendable and seemingly simple enterprise of sending little delicacies to the boys at the front a certain amount of instruction and supervision is necessary. Otherwise they may get the notion that the folks at home are not really interested in stimulating their appetites.

#### SOME MISDIRECTED BENEVOLENCE

For instance, jam seems to be the most implacable foe of the Anglo-Saxon soldier. In the early days of the great war the British soldiery complained bitterly of a plethora of apple jam on the Flanders

front, and as this is written some of our guardsmen on the Mexican border are hanging banners on their outward walls for the same reason.

An officer in a Brooklyn regiment wrote to a friend:

We are suffering mostly from the attention of our friends, who learned that jam was a delicacy. The jam issued by the United States is about twice what is needed by a man in this climate. Some idiot has told the folks we need jam. Consequently my store-tent has about three hundred bottles of it, all raspberry. Yesterday a case of twenty-four bottles of raspberry came from a friend. To-day I read in a paper that the Red Cross is raising funds to send us raspberry jam. Do, please, write to the newspapers and stop it!

The needs of a military hospital are, in a general way, much the same all over the world and at all seasons of the year; but the needs of the man in the trenches who is not a candidate for hospital care vary considerably, as the jam episode indicates. Only one who is on the ground, or who has had an opportunity to study the situation from first-hand data, can possibly know what these needs may be.

For example, as this is written, there is a demand for two kinds of supplies—spiritual and physical—from the Mexican border, and no layman would be likely to hit upon either one. The first and most insistent cry is for books and magazines—just plain, ordinary fiction and light reading, or even heavy reading, but reading-matter by all means.

When the situation along the Rio Grande is understood, this need is readily explained. The frontier garrisons are not fighting, and are not in the presence of an enemy. The weather is frightfully hot. Consequently, from about ten o'clock in the morning until after three in the afternoon practically the whole army does nothing but try to keep cool and fight the hard fight against homesickness.

In our well-ordered and peaceful times we speak lightly of this latter affliction as an amusing weakness of childhood. Doctors, and especially military doctors, call it nostalgia, and regard it with grave

alarm. It is a real disease, as they know. Many a boy taken suddenly from his home to a distant mobilization camp and placed, possibly for the first time in his life, amid utterly strange surroundings, has almost literally died of it. It so weakens his resistance that he is an easy victim to any other disease that may attack him.

The writer knows intimately a young man who served as corporal in a Western regiment during the Spanish War. There was a boy in his squad who nearly died of nostalgia in one of the Florida fever-camps. Night after night the corporal sat by the sick lad's cot and held his hand. If he let go for an instant, the boy woke out of a sound sleep. The corporal was finally able to get him a two weeks' furlough, and he came back from home strong and well.

Keeping the mind occupied is one of the best preventives for homesickness. Hence the demand for reading-matter from the Rio Grande. The Red Cross man told the young lady from Radcliffe College to bundle up all the "popular novels" she could lay hands on and send them to him. He also told her that she could with a little instruction and a sewing-machine, help to answer the other call.

This was for abdominal bandages of a certain make and of a fine quality of flannel, which are worn by young and vigorous men, not because there is anything wrong with them, but because they don't want anything to go wrong. It has been demonstrated that these bandages are a wonderful preventive for the more common enteric disturbances that have so often devastated military camps.

The bandages are not manufactured by any of the big hospital supply companies. They must be made "in the home." And, as this is written, the Red Cross needs thousands of them.

In short, the young lady from Radcliffe College learned that in a large part of Red Cross work in war-time a woman's place is the home. One of the pamphlets of instruction issued by the



Red Cross says that "the assistance of chapters, auxiliary organizations, and individuals will be needed for the purchase of ambulances, litters, and other equipment"; for it is not generally known that the Red Cross is financed wholly by private contributions.

#### THE RED CROSS AND THE GOVERNMENT

In its relations with the United States government, this famous organization is unique. It receives nothing but official countenance and a chance to serve. Not a dollar of public funds goes to its support, but it is "authorized" by the government "to render aid to its land and naval forces in time of war"—a privilege accorded to no other voluntary society.

In order to gain permission to perform these services, the Red Cross submits to a general overseeing of its affairs by a group of high government officials, and to an extremely rigid auditing of its accounts each year by experts of the War Department. The government gives no money, but insists on knowing how every dollar is spent.

It is all business from beginning to end. The society is recognized as part of the sanitary forces of the military establishment of the republic, and certain definite duties and obligations are laid upon it. All of these are of a technical and highly important character, and its directing personnel must be of the finest. For that reason, doctors and nurses, for instance, are not requested to volunteer. They are hired.

As nearly as is possible, the line of demarcation between the sphere of the Red Cross and that of the regular medical establishment of the army is definitely fixed. But this arrangement is necessarily elastic. It depends on the character of a campaign, the slow or rapid shifting of troops, and the swinging of the battle-line; and also on the character of the country.

In the recent flood of European war-pictures, the poster showing the Red Cross nurse kneeling in the trenches, suc-

coring the wounded, with shrapnel bursting all around, is merely a thrilling work of the imagination or the record of a very unusual accident. The firing-line is no place for a Red Cross nurse or any other woman. When a nurse has come under fire, it must have been due to a sudden and unforeseeable shift of battle, and not to deliberate barbarism.

Under fairly normal circumstances the duties of Red Cross nurses and doctors end far behind the zone of fire. There are, roughly, four stages in the progress of a badly wounded man from the firing-line to his place of recovery. He receives first aid in the trench from a comrade, a litter-bearer, or a military surgeon, and is hurried as promptly as possible to the field-hospital, which is often within range of the enemy's guns. Thence, again as soon as possible, he is moved farther to the rear, to what is known as the field base-hospital.

In the territory between these two hospitals the work of the Red Cross and that of the purely military medical organization overlap. The patient may go to the rear in a Red Cross ambulance or in an army vehicle. But at the field base-hospital, which is beyond the range of the enemy's fire, and beyond the probable reach of a sudden rush through a weakening battle-front, the Red Cross is in full charge.

The field base-hospital is, ideally, so placed that there are ample time and ample facilities for a fairly leisurely removal of the inmates, if the campaign is going badly. Here the wounded man is kept until he is able to stand a considerable railroad journey. Then he is placed in a hospital car, and travels hundreds of miles, perhaps, to one of the great home bases, where he is kept until he has completely recovered.

By way of illustration, if there had been heavy fighting beyond the Rio Grande, the Red Cross would have been in charge of field base-hospitals in the Mexican and Texas towns along the border. And great base-hospitals were being

established in St. Louis, Chicago, New Orleans, New York, and other cities—all under the Red Cross.

All of this is covered in the President's proclamation of April 11, 1911:

Except in cases of great emergency, the personnel of the American National Red Cross will not be assigned to duty at the front, but will be confined to hospitals in the home country, at the base of operations, on hospital ships, and along the lines of communication of the military and naval forces of the United States.

About a year later the War and Navy Departments issued a circular and general order in which the fighting machinery of the republic stated definitely what it expected from the Red Cross. There are three important heads—personnel, supplies, and transportation material—and any woman can contribute to the last two without leaving her home town.

#### WHAT EVERY WOMAN CAN DO

She can also come under the classification of personnel, which is divided into three classes. The first class is made up of the trained specialists, such as surgeons, physicians, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, and nurses' aids. The second class includes those who are willing to serve only in the home country, and in this group are both the trained and the untrained. The third class consists of those willing to serve in their places of residence only.

The field columns and hospital units are recruited almost entirely from the ranks of the specialists—doctors, druggists, nurses, dietetists, cooks, teamsters, chauffeurs, and so on. But in the other two classes "will be found the greater number of untrained personnel upon whom the Red Cross will depend for the performance of many and varied duties."

Among these duties is helping at rest stations and points of transshipment. It takes a lot of willing hands to feed the soldiers passing through such points, and to keep the supplies moving in a regular and orderly manner. But the greatest help that women without technical train-

ing can give is in the obtaining of material and the preparation of hospital supplies. Any woman with a little money and a natural, womanly aptitude for scissors and thread can do a great deal.

As officially set forth, the duties of those without scientific training are five. They are to raise and collect funds; to manufacture hospital garments and supplies; to take charge of the transportation of supplies; to aid the families of soldiers and sailors, and their widows and children; to train those permanently crippled or blinded, and to assist them in securing self-supporting positions.

In the field of providing supplies, no woman need fear that she is devoting her energies to an enterprise that is already well taken care of. The amount of supplies needed in a military hospital is amazing. To go into the matter in detail would require literary elbow-room to the extent of about one whole number of this magazine. If the reader is sufficiently interested, the Red Cross will, on request, send a pamphlet with the technical designation of "A. R. C. 126," which outlines the contents of each of eight different kinds of boxes which may be forwarded to the Red Cross.

For instance, Box No. 1 contains seven dozen gauze bandages of three different widths, all ten yards long; twenty dozen gauze compresses of two different sizes; three dozen gauze rolls of two sizes; sixteen dozen gauze sponges of two sizes; a dozen knitted sponges—directions for making supplied on request; three dozen gauze drains of three sizes, each drain to be wrapped separately; two dozen gauze laparotomy pads with tape, and two rolls of absorbent cotton.

In all, there are three hundred and twenty yards of manufactured gauze in a No. 1 box. The regulation supply for an army unit of five hundred beds includes twenty-six of these boxes and fifty-nine of the other seven kinds; and the actual consumption is likely to be larger still. There is plenty of work for the women at home when a nation goes to war.

# The Shadow of the Petticoat



by  
Harold Titus

WHEN Jess Anderson rode around the sharp bend of the highway and turned her long-limbed sorrel horse in beside the weather-beaten box of a schoolhouse, she brought action to that fine mountain morning. Before her appearance it had been still with that unqualified quiet which can obtain only in a country of vast reaches, of sweeping lines, of dwarfed detail. In the brilliant sunlight, bringing warmth after the crisp Arizona night, animal life dozed gratefully and the wind had not risen above a draft sufficient to flutter the cloth election-notice carelessly nailed to the door of the brown building.

She slipped from the side-saddle, tied her horse to a low oak-scrub, and kicked out of the bulky riding-skirt, singing in a voice decidedly off key, yet peculiarly mellow:

"Take me when I'm in the humor;  
That's just now!"

Then, dropping the song and loosing the cinches, she spoke to her horse.

"We're early, Donny; but these polls are to open at eight, and Lord help the

woman who delays 'em, let the men do as they will!"

She showed her big, strong, white teeth as she smiled up at the fine-headed animal, and slapped his flank until he switched his trim hocks briskly with his long tail.

The woman unfastened a package from the saddle and turned to gaze with squinted eyes off across the cañon.

"That's Juliet," she said aloud after a moment; "and that white face by her must be Ada."

Ordinary sight would have searched that far point many minutes before making out those motionless cattle, let alone distinguishing them from any of the other hundreds that run the hills which pile back and upward from Lonesome Valley; but Jess Anderson had been watching cattle for forty years, more than the span of a generation, and in that time she had become expert.

Forty years seemed incredible, for she did not appear to be more than forty-five; but in another decade her allotted time would be lived, spite of her trim, straight back and the virile set of her head. Her

shoulders, on inspection, did attest something, for they tended toward roundness. It was not the roundness of a slouch nor that of a weak woman, but rather the sort that comes from lifting and carrying and growing inexpressibly tired day after day for many years.

Her feet, too, were the feet of a toiler—large, and frankly so. The shoes on them were designed for men, for comfort and service, not for women and the pampering of a vanity. Her dress was white and simple, and by the drawing of a seam, revealed as she unbuttoned her tan jacket, gave evidence of home manufacture. A black scarf was about her head, tied under her chin; and as she loosed it and let it fall back on her shoulders, an observer would have remarked her hair, possibly a trifle too abundant to be all her own, yet in appearance not overly bountiful.

That was the one touch of the unreal about Jess Anderson; but her wide-set blue eyes were so honest, so brimming with laughs and tears and humanness, that the fractional falsity of her hair might have been increased by many times and none would have remembered it long enough even to take the trouble of excusing it. Those eyes were set in a network of fine wrinkles that wandered off across the high cheek-bones and down toward the generous, full-lipped mouth. The chin was square and determined—just as determined to soften and quiver as it was to become steely and fixed.

"On time, if I am all dressed up—and a woman!" she laughed, smoothing out the skirt with her great brown hands, then lifting them to pat gently the added hair. "But that ain't likely to get me anything to-day, is it, Donny?"

A subtle quality of irony mingled with the humor in her voice. This was Election Day. For the first time in history women were to be represented on the precinct-boards in an Arizona election, and Jess Anderson was the one selected to sit officially in the Lynch Creek voting-place.

"Just think, Donny," she continued, "I'm actually equal to you men at last!"

She slapped his belly until he set his ears back, wrinkled his nose, bobbed his head, and stepped warningly with his hind feet. Then she laughed, high and heartily, and turned to walk to the school-house, where she kicked an empty powder-box against the wall, seated herself, unrolled the bundle, and prepared to work on the embroidery it contained. The laughter clung in her eyes, and she wet her lips with her tongue in amusement.

"Equality at last!" she chuckled.

For forty years she had lived in that community, riding the mountains with her mate after their cattle and the valley after their horses, clinging to the side-saddle probably because of a traditional fetish of refinement, though she would have explained that riding astride gave her cramps in the legs. Those years had yielded prosperity for the red ranch-house over the mountain, but their tribute had been wrested by unbroken struggle against drought and cold and many lurking disasters.

The Andersons had won, and were well-to-do—at the cost of youth and their best strength. Yet neither the man's nor the woman's spirit had hardened in the narrowing process of acquisition. Instead, they had mellowed with acceleration, so now, with due perspective, this woman could well laugh at petty prejudice.

"Equality at last!" she chuckled again.

Prejudices there were—the prejudice of sex, for one; the prejudice that adheres in small minds to the missionary, for another. Because, along with economic success, she had uncompromisingly sustained certain fixed principles, certain conceptions of right and wrong, still others had been turned against her.

Yet these enmities were not without their contrasting compensations, and the friends made in her ceaseless activity were of the dynamic sort. She had ridden miles through mountain storms to perform the functions of a physician, gently, capably, as a matter of course.



She had, with tongue and quirt, pushed physical conflict to succor the oppressed, raging righteously at the offender.

She had a commanding confidence with animals that made her a better horse-runner and horse-breaker than most men. She would not countenance undue harshness in the handling of brutes by others, making it her affair to enforce a degree of kindness throughout her rough neighborhood.

She possessed the patience to sit all day and watch a locust discard its outworn skin, or to familiarize herself with the purposes and traits of animal or plant life. She had the reasoning ability to construct for herself a wonderfully logical geology. She had a passion for art that led her to name her stock after the people of Shakespeare and Byron, in order to keep the memory of great verses fresh. Such competency, such militancy, such curiosity about things generally thought useless or trivial set her apart, made her an oddity, loved, disliked, feared, depending on individuals and circumstances.

As all her toiling had brought pecuniary achievement, so all those intimate associations with other humans, all that watching and theorizing and reading, had made her broader than her pursuit. It was peculiarly fitting that Jess Anderson should sit in election as the first woman to serve on her precinct-board, for none in that district stood positively for better ideals.

## II

TEN minutes after her arrival an aged man came down the point, swinging a stout staff, picking his way over the rocks with great care, for his shoes were thin of bottom and his feet tender from little use. He was a musty, fusty old fellow with beard and mane of grimy gray, who had spent twenty years in the next gulch getting ready to do some placer-mining. This was literally true—he had been getting ready for twenty years.

"Mornin', Mis' Anderson," he said with a toothless lisp, meeting her direct

gaze by a wavering look from his slate-colored eyes.

"Hello, doc! Where's the crowd?"

"They'll be along, I guess," he replied, brightening. "They always have," he added, with a sway of his hips like that of a self-conscious schoolgirl.

"What's always happened is bound to happen—is that it?" Jess Anderson suggested as she picked a knot from her thread.

The old man laughed in embarrassment and stammered:

"Why, I presume so. That is—well—"

She looked up at him sharply, and he swayed his hips again and shifted his gaze away from hers. They were thinking of the same thing. Old Doc Smith knew that Jess Anderson was aware of the fact. The difference was that she wanted him to know what she thought, while he, had he been able, would have hidden what passed through his mind.

Under his sallow skin a faint flush appeared, and he shuffled his feet in confusion. The wordless interval, her steady, half-amused, divining eyes, his queer feeling of guilt, combined to shatter the remnant of assurance with which he had first addressed her. The thought which was uppermost in his mind, which the woman knew was making him hesitate and avoid her eyes, which he wanted to stifle and could not, at last found distorted expression:

"It 'll seem funny—sort of queer—to have a lady on the board!"

She laughed aloud at that, somewhat gloatingly.

"Maybe to you, doc. All men, though, don't see humor in the same thing. Why, you'd think I'd been stealing calves from a blind widow, to see the way some of the leading citizens of this neighborhood look at me! So reproachful! It wasn't that way before you men decided to let us girls vote. It wasn't so bad, even, until I was put on the board; but now—well, why this is thus I can't say, doc, but I sure am outlawed. No, there's



nothing funny about having me around to-day for a lot of your he friends."

"Why, I—I'm sure I hadn't heard anything said—"

"Doc! Don't you stand there and lie to me! All over Arizona a lot of you men are predictin' death and ruin because we women are going to vote. Right here on the creek you're all blaming it on me, because I happen to be the only woman in the precinct who holds her head up and talks right out loud!"

She bit her thread with a show of temper and drew the needle through the cloth. Then she laughed silently, and Doc Smith, embarrassed to the point of desperation, plunged headlong into words to extricate himself from his helpless confusion.

"I guess nobody's thinkin' much about anything but this Wyoming Kid fracas," he opined. "I guess everybody from the sheriff down's pretty much scared, and I guess they've got a right to be, too. He's dangerous! He's the most dangerous crim'nal we've had in this county since Parker—"

"What's this, doc?"

"The Wyoming Kid! Hadn't you heard? Prescott's all excited about it."

"I've got three orphan calves and a flock of sick turkeys over home, and I ain't been in town for two weeks."

"My, I thought everybody knew about it!" Doc Smith's old eyes had lost their uncertainty, his vacillation was gone. He was firm with the poise of purpose, and he stepped closer, stooping toward the woman with both hands on his staff as he enlightened her. "This kid—only a sixteen-year-old boy—has been shootin' things up for a week. Only night before last he was at Dewey, stole some grub out of the store, and shot through two windows when he rode off. Why, he—"

"A sixteen-year-old kid, you say?"

"That's all, but my, he's a bad one! He's got the boys in the sheriff's office guessing, all right. He's got everybody else scared, too. He's been in three shootin'-scrapes and made one more gun-

play that they know about, and he's kept away from 'em a week slick as a whistle. They've had a posse after him four days."

"Doc, do you mean to tell me that a kid like that has been runnin' a razee over all the men in this county?"

"That's what he's done! He come into Prescott on an old bay horse and tried to buy whisky at the Palace. They wouldn't sell it to him, what with a wet-or-dry election comin' off to-day and all; and he told about bein' run out of Ash Fork by a deputy, an' that he only let the man off without killin' him because he had a family. Everybody took him as a joke, and petted him an' encouraged him to act mean and tough and wild. Just a little fellow, so high, but my, such a talker! The more attention he attracted the worse he talked, swearin' and lyin', an' the worse he lied the more folks made of him. A week ago Wednesday he was down in the pool-room on Granite Street, just off Whisky Row, and when they tried to make him pay for something he'd broke he pulled out his gun and shot at the man who runs it, just missin' taking his arm off. The bullet tore the man's sleeve and smashed a lot of pool-balls. Then he run up to Pardee's corral and took a horse. Just as he was ridin' out the marshal tried to stop him, and *he* got shot at. Well, they begun huntin' for him next day out by Thumb Butte—he'd started west—but that night he showed up at Senator, asked for a side of bacon and some beans, and when they give 'em to him he pulled his gun and backed out of the store without payin'. Then, night 'fore last, he done the same thing at Dewey, only he shot there."

During this recital the woman had sat watching old Doc Smith's face closely, studying his expression, her embroidery neglected in her lap and a grimness about her mouth. The man paused, his breath quick from the excitement of his narration. The hands on his staff trembled.

"Are they all takin' him as seriously as you do, doc?" she asked.

"My goodness, Mis' Anderson, he's a killer! You can't tell nothing about what a kid like that 'll do. That's what makes it so hard to hunt him. A regular gunman wouldn't take the risks he does. There's no tellin' who or how many he'll kill. He ain't really bad, understand; he's just showin' off, an' the more he scares folks the more he'll want to. The boys who are hunting him can't shoot him down, because, after all, he's only a little boy; but they stand a mighty good chance of bein' killed themselves."

"Jiminy fish-hooks!" she cried. "'Course there's danger; 'course there's a good chance of their bein' shot up when they go round taking a kid like that seriously! The trouble with that boy is that he knows they think he's a bad man, like they encouraged him to pretend he is. What he needs is to have his jacket warmed good and plenty, instead of havin' a lot of men take him as seriously as he takes himself—an' some of 'em fathers, too! They ought to be horse-whipped for egg'in' him on!"

She was so intense, so firm in her conviction, and took up her needlework with such a display of provocation, that the old man regarded it as a personal rebuke. He stood silent for a hesitant interval; then he began to talk trivialities, to obviate the greater discomfiture of longer silence. He would have walked away from her had any excuse offered, but none did; so he prattled on.

The flush receded from the woman's face, and after a time she commented briefly on what he had to say, much to his delight and encouragement.

"But say, you s'pose they'll vote her dry?" he asked finally, with a sally at gaiety.

"Hard to tell," she replied, flashing her fine teeth at him.

"Some thinks you—the—it 'll go dry."

"You mean that all you men who don't want it to go dry think us women will outvote you?"

"Oh, no, I wouldn't—nobody has said—although—"

"Doc," she said in a sharp voice, "you know well enough that's what you men are saying. Don't try to tell me! I only wish you'd say some of these things to our faces, that's all!"

Once more the old man's lack of assurance was betrayed in his wavering gaze, his shuffling feet. He left off leaning on his cane and swayed his hips. And a moment before all had been going so smoothly!

"Well, it don't make no difference to me," he confided after a moment. "'Twon't make a dollar's worth of difference to me or give me a minute's worry far's that's concerned."

A slight lift of her shoulders at that, and one of those quick laugh-lights in her eyes. Let a passer approach Doc Smith's shack with a bottle, and he would be forced to outtalk a Clay or a Webster to depart with a solitary drop of fluid in his flask. And now—prohibition made no difference to him, the old toper!

Jess suppressed laughter, because she knew that in old liars the sense of dignity is developed to a point where it can easily be wounded. In her life she had never hurt a living thing without reason.

### III

"HERE comes Jake Reese," Doc Smith announced, with relief.

The newcomer approached the voting-place, nodded surlily to the woman, grunted a greeting to Doc Smith, and stood apart from them with hands in his pockets, gazing gloomily across the creek. A sheepman, this, and economically and socially set against the woman because of it.

One summer's day Jess Anderson had come upon Reese abusing an ancient burro. She was on her sorrel at the time, and stated simply that unless he desisted she would ride the horse up and down his carcass until it resembled cowboy steak. The burro wagged its ears in relief as she rode away, and Reese nursed the memory as a grievance.

She went on embroidering now, her mouth set sternly. When he failed to draw response from her, old Doc Smith walked to where Reese stood, and remarked that it wouldn't make a dollar's or a minute's difference to him if the State did go dry.

Presently two men arrived on horseback—one the clerk of the board, with his books and ballots, the other an early voter. As he dismounted, the clerk glanced at Jess Anderson with patient, long-suffering resignation in his eyes. It was as if she were intruding in a manner that hurt him so sorely that he could not bring himself to speak of it.

His brother ran a saloon in Prescott, and the clerk had an interest in the business. He honestly believed that only those self-acclaimed lovers of personal liberty who find expression of their God-given right in commercialized pandering to alcoholic cravings should be trusted with the franchise, and that he and his sort knew the bitter pressure of injustice. Women, he generalized, could not understand.

The mere voter did not look at the woman at all, but as he moved past her she looked at him, studying his averted face with hostility. The feeling was strong in her; it had been hatched on the night when she helped his eighth child into the world—the eighth that his wan, overworked wife had borne within twelve years. The things Jess Anderson said to him after he had walked through the rain to ask her, and whined over the burden of another mouth, had sent him skulking from her, and not once in the years that followed had he met her glance.

One or two other men straggled in. As they passed Jess Anderson, their manner varied, yet each, by his bearing, seemed to exclude her from the group. Legally, she was a factor; socially, an outcast. Finally the last member of the board had reported, and the group retired within the building to make ready for the work with which it was commissioned.

The men were subdued and quiet, and

the few words spoken were obviously forced. They moved with unusual alacrity, however, to arrange the table and chairs, and the interest that they displayed in the books and official documents was nothing less than marvelous. Each was eager to be of vital use; every one strove to have some other into whose eyes he could look with preoccupation, thereby making it unnecessary for him to meet the half-amused, covertly triumphant gaze of Jess Anderson.

Never in the history of that precinct had such an interest been manifested in preliminaries. But when everything was arranged, and there was nothing more of the moment to provoke discussion or busy them, old Doc Smith, palpably uneasy, blurted out:

"Seems funny—havin' a lady on the board with us!"

A quick, telltale silence shut down. Then Reese grunted, the clerk gave a strained laugh, and the woman, showing her teeth, said:

"Yes—you men needn't be afraid, though; I ain't so very dangerous this time of year!"

Dangerous, no; uncongenial, beyond a doubt, for the men, after casting their own votes, went outside the schoolhouse and left her alone. They arranged themselves along the sunny side of the building, and pulled their hats down to keep out the bright November sunlight. They used tobacco, and, after the constraint had lost its first edge, they talked—talked of the Wyoming Kid and coyotes and placer locations and monomania and socialism and many other more or less related things. Old Doc Smith said twice that it wouldn't make a dollar's difference to him if—

"I s'pose she'll go dry, though," the eight-time father said in a lowered voice. "The women 'll vote us out!"

The clerk drew in his right boot, stuck out the left one, applied a California match to his pipe, and nodded resignedly.

"That's the trouble," he said, coughing out smoke. "You said somethin'!"

Again silence, as if their thoughts chorused. The sheepman looked at Doc Smith, and Doc Smith winked, to let Reese know that he was thinking of the proximity of woman.

"Wonder if the boys in the sheriff's office is thinkin' most 'bout election or that kid!" some one ventured.

Doc Smith peered cautiously about and held up a warning hand.

"She says," he whispered, and the others strained forward to listen, "that the boys in town are to blame for it all, because they encouraged him, and that if women were runnin' things"—he was improvising under the influence of the interest centering about him—"they'd stop all this trouble by stopping takin' the kid seriously."

The others sat back against the building with simultaneous sighs of disgust. Two shook their heads hopelessly, one spat in disdain, one swore in despair under his breath. Doc Smith cackled aloud at the preposterousness of it all, and Jess Anderson's reported attitude was dismissed as another fallacy of the feminine mind. But soon they were off again on the bad boy who ran through the mountains, and they did not hear the woman chuckling under cover of their voices.

Ideas of the whereabouts of the kid ran low, and the talk lagged. With its lagging, the common grievance pricked through into consciousness again.

"Now, you see," began the sheepman, gesturing with a hand, raising his brows, and drawing down the corners of his mouth, "we've got a good sheruff, an' he's near helpless. If you let women"—his voice sank still lower—"git runnin' things, what 'll heppun? They hadn't ought to vote if they don't hold offus, had they? They hadn't ought to be paid if they don't fiddle, had they?" He let that sink in and went on: "What 'd we do with a woman for sheruff now? Huh! Why, s'pose we was to git into war, like England is! If women vote, they'd ought to hold offus, an' they'd ought to

fight, hadn't they? An' would they? Huh!"

He broke a pine splinter with vicious vigor, and settled back.

Again Doc Smith looked surreptitiously about, listening intently. There was no sound from within except the snip of shears and a periodical tinkle as they were placed on the table.

"You know, I've been figurin' it all out," he confided, a hand on the sheepman's knee. "I've thought it over an' over, an' read all sides of it, I guess. When you come right down to it, boys, woman's place is in the home!" His voice sank in tone and pitch on this last phrase in a manner that obviated any argument. It was like the citation of a maxim. "'Course, there is some women who might do," he provided less solemnly; "but, as I say, their place, take 'em by and large, is in the home."

The rancher from up-creek nodded sagely.

"Darned right!" he said loudly, almost with bravado. "In the home—that's how I see it!"

The prolific father growled inarticulately, and stirred and growled again, and drew a plug portion from his pocket. Shaking it at Doc Smith, he said:

"You called the turn on 'em! Even if some is cap'le of votin', it's woman nature to grab a foot if you give 'em an inch. They go too far—that's the trouble with them." The philosopher growled again as he set his teeth in the plug and twisted testily. "Let them that does the work do the votin', I say!" he declared, the words muffled by the substance in his mouth.

And before they were well uttered the voice of Jess Anderson rose sharply:

"Get out of that!"

They heard her step quickly on the floor, and into a far corner crashed a stick of stove-wood which she had picked up and hurled.

The group outside jumped, to a man. The parent of marked fecundity rose to his feet with an alacrity second only to



that of actual alarm. They stared at one another with looks that might have appeared to an observer as guilty glances.

"Those rotten pack-rats!" the woman muttered, stepping to the doorway and looking far up into the blue, pine-clad mountains to the southward.

Beyond that comment she offered no explanation, nor did she look at the startled males who appeared to find relief in her words. Something about her—perhaps an unnatural puckering of the eye, possibly a repressed tremor about her mouth—indicated that she held her expression so at the cost of an effort. Also, those details might have been symptomatic of a triumphant secret, for in her eye was a generous dash of keen amusement. Just at the point where it might have broken into a betraying smile, she covered it by remarking:

"God might have made as nice a day as this, but He never did better, did He?"

She bit her thread and turned from them, a cryptic glitter in her gaze, her big mouth drawn down in a spirit of mute levity. The group along the building shuffled itself, and, with a fresh deal, the talk again gained fluency and normal tone.

#### IV

FROM time to time a voter came, but those occasions were island intervals in a sea of waiting. The registry showed, in all, less than a dozen accredited users of the franchise in Lynch Creek precinct. Five were on the board, one in jail, and two others had devoted their day to the ambling discussion which went on under the eaves of the polling-place.

The times when others did arrive were welcomed by Jess Anderson, because months had passed since she had spent so many consecutive hours beneath a roof, and in the entrance and exit of each voter and his accompanying quota of officials she found excuse for going to the doorway and letting the fine Yavapai sun beat down on her good-natured face. Other-

wise, she sat and sewed and laughed silently to herself at what was said in lowered voices on the other side of the weathered wall.

About her was a sense of secure superiority. But for that, she would have been prompted to speak out, to argue, to denounce. That bigness gave her perspective, and she could laugh with unalloyed enjoyment, keeping her disgust for individuals apart from her valuation of socialized judgments as current on Lynch Creek.

No break for dinner; in the manner of mountain men food was subordinated to the day's business. The last voter came in mid afternoon, moving a bunch of cattle down the creek. He stayed just long enough to cast his ballot, then hurried away.

"That's about all, I should say, after consultin' the science of mathematics," the woman remarked. "I suppose, though, we've got to stay on here until five, if there ain't a voter in a day's ride!"

"That's regulations," the clerk replied, with much importance.

"All right! I didn't know regulations applied to only closing time. I thought that because we opened when we got ready, we might close when we got through. I can stand it if you men can, though. I may get so hungry I can't tell the truth, but I won't question regulations. My, no!"

She made a depreciating click with her tongue and turned away. The others looked at the clerk as if he had their earnest support and sincere sympathy.

Jess Anderson went back to her fancy-work in silence, and old Doc Smith punched the clerk with a ragged elbow.

"An' at heart they *want* to be in the home!" he whispered.

Then they told stories of the last wet-or-dry election, and tales of saloons led them back to the Wyoming Kid and the Prescott Silver Cornet Band and Villa and leprosy and the Democrats and horse-racing.



"Now, there's a race-horse!" one remarked, wagging a thumb at Jess Anderson's sleeping sorrel. "Now, he—"

Once more the talk was snagged! Race-horses—that particular horse—the woman inside—feminine voters—there you were! All paths led to it!

The sheepman sighed hopelessly.

"All I got to say is, them what fiddles ought to pay," he misquoted himself in a voice that was daringly loud. "An' they ain't up to men nohow, noway. You can't get around that. They're naturally different! Maybe 'tain't their fault, but they *are*!"

The chorus of instantaneous assent which followed this expression was eloquent. It was one of those spontaneous outbursts, a there-you-have-it agreement that heralded common ground attained after supreme struggle. It was the long-sought kernel of the matter. Different! Women were *naturally* different! It explained everything.

"Who's that?"

At the query, all eyes focused on a horseman who approached at a shambling trot, head down, almost as if he were sleeping in the saddle.

Jess Anderson looked up from her needlework and out at the mountains again. She sighed, and assured herself that at least the hills were big and clean and above quibbling. She was so absorbed in contemplating the situation in which she found herself that the words spoken outside did not at first impress her. When her attention was diverted, it was by the manner of expression out there rather than by what was said. A new, gruff note was in the voices—sounds of men moving quickly and briefly. Then:

"Up ag'in' the wall! Hands up! Line up, you!"

The words were sinister, but the voice was thin, weightless, almost childish.

The next sounds were muffled oaths and ejaculations half of fright, half of disgust.

"I'll be—"

"Look out, boys—"

Then the light voice spoke peremptorily again.

"Little less talkin' there! Now, come out yere, one at a time, an' put yer watches an' money on the ground!"

Jess Anderson's fancy-work slid to the floor, and one hand slowly closed as she strained forward to catch each new sound. On that last unmistakable command she rose quickly, stepped around the table, and leaned forward cautiously until she could see through the sashless window the action that took place.

The Wyoming Kid, his feet far apart, a lopping Stetson down over his eyes, trained his gun on the six men, who, lined against the building, held their hands at various heights, from old Doc Smith's, which trembled beside his ears, to the sheepman's, stretching far out of his jumper-sleeves.

Six grown men and the Wyoming Kid—a child! But the gun was a thirty-eight on a forty-five frame, and the boy held it, not at their heads, but with the anatomical sophistication of the trained fighter, his slowly moving muzzle etching an aching line straight across the abdomens of each man. Not one of the half dozen would take a chance at provoking the youth further.

"Come on! *Pronto*, you *hombres*!" the Kid ordered.

On his words, but not because of them, Jess Anderson caught her breath sharply. She had strained forward another inch, and her movement brought into view the skinny bay horse. The beast's flanks quivered, his taut sides labored, and from his lips strung crimson slaver. Not only had he carried this adolescent highwayman with his last strength, but he had been mistreated, had been jerked and yanked until his old lips had torn. Sight of it tore the woman's heart, for it outraged her creed of kindness.

She wheeled, caution slipping from her, and crossed the noisy floor with determined strides. She paused a brief instant on the door-sill, mouth half open, a hot, angry flush flooding her face.

"Boy, put up that gun!"

The Wyoming Kid drew his feet closer together. Four of the six heads that were for the moment subordinated in position to their owner's hands turned to catch a glimpse of the woman from the tails of anxious eyes. They saw her hesitate just long enough to take in the entire situation. Then she stepped resolutely down from the doorway with a quick gesture of one forearm.

"Boy, don't point that gun at me!" she cried, moving toward him with a swift, slightly uneven stride.

"Look out, mis'—"

"Stay back!"

The Kid's words took the warning from Doc Smith's lips.

"Stay back nothin'! Boy, dog-gone you, turn that gun away from me!"

She gestured again and more severely with her forearm; she increased the pace of her advance. The six men behind her remained motionless, ignominious in their helplessness. The youth backed a step toward his panting horse, and trained the gun exclusively on the white-gowned woman.

"Keep off!" he snarled. "Don't make me shoot a woman!"

"Woman!" she scoffed only half aloud. "Make you shoot! You wouldn't shoot off anything but your mouth! You couldn't hit a flock of barns flyin' low with that pepper-shaker! You—"

She was near enough to lunge for him. He turned, stumbled, and was jerked back as her hard, firm, capable fingers fastened in the neck of his shirt. With a deft movement she grasped the gun-barrel, and, though he struggled with all his strength, she twisted and wrenched the weapon from his clutch. Then, surveying the thing for an instant with contempt in her eyes, she tossed it far away and stood holding the culprit before her, hatless, scared, and whining.

Behind Jess four pairs of hands came down. Old Doc Smith and the cowman from up-creek still stood as if covered. The others did not make any move worth

recording. Somehow, it was no longer their affair. They had been at once relieved of their danger and excluded from the situation by a peculiar quality about the woman, and being thus set aside was uncomfortable—yea, humiliating.

"Look at that horse's mouth!" the woman said, shaking the Wyoming Kid savagely to bring him facing the abused animal. "Look at that blood! Look at those ribs! Boy, ain't you ashamed? You—why, that poor old skate!"

A rush of tears came into her eyes, into her voice, choking off more words. She turned her gaze from the animal to the youngster—the Wyoming Kid, the terrorizer. She shook him vigorously, and a high-pitched growl of disgust came from her. Then she stooped and gathered him close.

He scratched and bit and fought like a savage; but she was as agile, move for move, as determined, blow for blow. Once he had her down—only for an instant, but when she was again mistress of the situation the white gown was a sorry mess. She fastened her fingers on his small neck thrice, but each time he shook off the strangling hold; a fourth attempt, and, amid grunts and whistlings of breath, she made her grip good.

Then, one leg twined around his, the free arm clamped about his waist, shielding her face against his own head, she forced him back and down and over, throwing him to his stomach finally and kneeling on his wriggling body.

It cannot be told at all delicately, so pass the detail. Suffice it to say that when her hand descended upon his posterior regions, the sharp, crackling report of flesh on flesh rose above the noises of the scuffle. Again and again that stinging, smacking hand fell, swifter, stronger, more in anger. The boy's feet flew desperately as he struggled to be free, but the woman's knee pressed him in the small of his back, the one hand clutched a quantity of his long, neglected hair—and the other spanked, and spanked, and spanked!

He cried before it ended—cried rantingly, as a small boy will who is at once hurt and angered. When the dreaded man-killer cried, Doc Smith's hands finally came down, and the old man joined the others in the belated laughter which was forced from them as they drew near the center of conflict.

"Now stand up there!"

Jess Anderson was tired and flushed and short of breath, but an expression of fine satisfaction was on her moist face. She scorched those others with a look that checked their audible mirth, and turned back to the Wyoming Kid.

"Boy, button up those overalls now, and you lead that poor old skate right down to my ranch, where he can have some care!"

She moved to where her riding-skirt hung on a tree, and stepped into it. As she buttoned the band, she surveyed the swollen-eyed, sniffling youth, who dusted off his hat and sobbed and hung his head.

"I'm going to keep you as well as your old horse," she said earnestly. "A little barley and alfalfa's all he needs. What you need is about two a day of what you just had; it 'll make a man of you! I'll see to it that you're made a man, boy, and I'll see to it that no fool sheriff breaks into my course of training and takes you seriously, too!"

A smile broke through her receding wrath, her big, white teeth gleaming in

contrast against the flush which hung in her face.

"You men can run this election until I get back," she said, her gaze averted in the embarrassment that came with seeing them so abjectly humbled, standing there in a circle about her, shifty-eyed, dumb, crestfallen. "I'll be back by five, by closing time, to count the votes. Lord knows I wouldn't break any regulations, but I've got to get that poor old skate home and turn this young scamp over to Fred Anderson until I can be relieved of these duties and take my place—woman's place—in the home, where I can understand what's going on, where I don't overstep myself, and where I'm up to average intelligence."

They went away then, the Wyoming Kid walking beside Jess Anderson's sorrel horse and leading his skinny bay beast, obeying as a spanked boy of his years should obey.

The group of six men stood about awkwardly, each acutely conscious of the presence and thoughts of the others. For an unbearable interval no one spoke. Then the sheepman said:

"See? Plain case of where her petticoats pertected her!"

"You're darned right!" declared the rest almost in unison.

Quick relief came to all six, for each thought that the others believed him sincere in subscribing so readily to that comfortable explanation.

## IN AUTUMN

THE rose that bloomed in crimson sweep  
Along the radiant way  
Has lost the red she longed to keep;  
Summer could not stay.

The bird that sang his golden time,  
And held high holiday,  
Has gone to find another clime;  
Summer could not stay.

And we, who met when spring was best,  
We, too, have gone our way,  
One to the east, one to the west;  
Summer could not stay!

Gertrude Brooke Hamilton



# RED TAPE AT WASHINGTON

by

Horace Towner

IN a certain government department building at Washington there are two desks, in the same room, about twenty feet apart. One of these desks receives the mail addressed to one division of that department, and the other desk receives the mail addressed to another division.

Now in any ordinary business establishment, if a letter came to one desk which should be handled by the man at another desk in the same room, the clerk would toss it over to his colleague, and the matter would be promptly attended to by the proper person. But that is not the way this government department works.

It happens that both divisions handle a great deal of correspondence, and frequently persons writing to the department, not knowing exactly how their letter should be addressed, send their communication with an address which takes it to desk No. 1. It should go, instead, to desk No. 2. The man at desk No. 1, instead of taking it twenty feet across the floor, sends a form letter back to the writer, something like this:

DEAR SIR:

Your letter addressed to — has been received at —. This matter is under the jurisdiction of —, and all communications should be addressed thereto.

He thereupon sends the form letter out under the government frank, Uncle Sam carries it through the mails, the sender

of the original letter receives it, writes another letter—if he is not discouraged—puts a two-cent stamp on it, and again Uncle Sam carries it through the mails. Eventually it reaches desk No. 2, just twenty feet away from the place at which the complaint or inquiry was originally received.

That is red tape. It is what Dickens derided when he wrote of the "circumlocution office." It is what the late Senator Aldrich meant when he said that he could save the government many million dollars a year by efficient business administration.

But there are two kinds of red tape. One is vexatious and unnecessary, as in the case given above. The other is vexatious, but necessary. The ordinary citizen, in his dealings with the government, often fails to differentiate between the kind of red tape that is merely the result of ridiculous oversystematization, and the kind that is necessary to safeguard the money of the taxpayers. Let us look at an example of the second kind, and see the difference.

## THE STORY OF A PENSION CLAIM

Not long ago a clergyman in a certain Illinois town wrote to his Congressman that one of his parishioners was a needy and deserving old soldier, and ought to have a pension. Somewhat to the good man's surprise, the Congressman was unable to reply by return mail that a pen-



sion had been allowed. Instead, he sent an elaborate application blank for the applicant to fill out.

The clergyman wrote back that this seemed to him to be a lot of useless red tape. He could vouch for the man's worthiness, and it was well known in the town that the man had been a soldier. What more could the government want than that?

It did not seem to occur to him that the Pension Bureau had no means of knowing whether the applicant was the man he represented himself to be or not, or whether he had ever served in the Civil War. Further, the man asked for a rate allowed by law only to soldiers who are disabled from some wound or disease received in line of duty, and the bureau had no means of knowing whether he was really disabled or not.

So, with some grumbling, the application blank was filled out, sworn to before a notary public, and sent to the Pension Bureau. This application had spaces for the man's full name, age, dates of service, company and regiment, personal description at time of enlistment, and other facts about his service. It also called for a description of any wound or disease he had suffered, with reference to his hospital record, if any, and included an oath that he was in good health prior to his enlistment, and was now unable to perform manual labor on account of the disability incurred in the service. Finally, on the back of the blank, the man's identity had to be established by some reputable citizen who knew him and could swear that he was the identical person he represented himself to be.

The application took its regular place in the files of the Pension Bureau. When the case was reached in due order, the examiner looked it over, found it apparently straight, and sent to the War Department for a transcript of the man's military record.

The record showed that a man of that name had served in the company and

regiment given. So far, all right; but the application stated that the soldier claimed a disability rating on account of an injury to his head, which he had received in line of duty, and as a result of which he was now totally disabled. There was no mention in the man's military record of any wound or other injury. His discharge certified that no reason against his reenlistment was known to exist, which meant that he was certainly not suffering from any permanent disability at that time.

#### PITY THE POOR VETERAN

So the bureau wrote back, asking for a specific statement of just how and when the injury had been received, and calling for affidavits from other members of the applicant's company testifying to the facts. The letter also demanded the affidavits of two physicians in order to establish the fact that the man was totally disabled, and that such disability was due entirely to the alleged injury to the head, and not in whole or in part to any other cause.

When this demand was received, the clergyman wrote to his Congressman a very sarcastic letter about governmental red tape. He drew a very pathetic picture of this honest and needy veteran waiting for his pension, or perhaps deprived of it entirely, merely because he could not satisfy the ridiculous rules laid down by a lot of officious clerks at Washington.

The Congressman could do nothing, however. The red tape of the Pension Bureau kept on unwinding.

In due time the applicant filed two physicians' affidavits, stating that he was totally disabled and unable to perform any kind of manual labor. These affidavits were from his home doctors, and laid great stress on the man's neediness and worthiness, but were somewhat vague when it came to establishing the historical connection between the alleged injury to the head and the man's helpless condition.



The soldier also filed another affidavit of his own, stating that he was unable to get into communication with any of his comrades who could testify to the injury. In lieu of such testimony he filed an affidavit from his sister, saying that it had always been well known in the family that he was hurt in the head during the Civil War.

The bureau was not yet satisfied. It sent the applicant an order to appear before the board of pension examiners in a near-by town. Again protests were sent to Washington against this interminable delay, but without effect.

The report of the examining board established that the man was disabled, but threw no light on the exact cause of the disability, beyond that it seemed to be partly due to a blow on the head, evidently received some years before, which had caused partial paralysis.

#### RED TAPE BARS A DISHONEST CLAIM

Still the bureau was not satisfied, and sent a special examiner to look into all the circumstances. After a thorough investigation, the examiner discovered that the injury to the man's head had been caused by his falling from a step-ladder in the year 1872!

Now this man was entitled to a pension for his service, but he was trying to defraud the government into paying him a larger rate than that to which he was entitled. He had come to the town where he lived some years after the Civil War, and his neighbors did not know the exact facts; but they knew that he was needy, and were willing to stretch a point to help him get a pension from the government. If the Pension Bureau had not insisted on requiring full proof as to every point of the case—in other words, if it had not strictly enforced the red tape which surrounds the administration of the office—a fair-sized lump of the taxpayers' money would have been paid out, every month thereafter, to a man who had no right to receive it.

The government has no means of know-

ing the personal characteristics of the thousands of citizens with whom it deals. It has no credit man, as have private firms, to look up the standing of an individual. It has to treat every person with whom it deals as if he were a potential thief. This works hardship to the worthy and honest, but it is necessary to protect the government from the unworthy and dishonest.

In any system which deals with a large number of people, concerning whom no personal knowledge can be had, an elaborate system of safeguards must be established. This is justified on the same ground that justifies our elaborate system of procedure in civil-law cases. It is too bad to force the man with a just claim to subject himself to the same delays and inquiries that must be enforced against the man with an unjust claim, but the law and the government can be no respecters of persons, and the individual must bow to the rules that protect the whole people.

The converse side of the same principle is seen in criminal law. It is too bad to give the guilty man the benefit of a thousand technical safeguards and immunities, which often bring about the defeat of justice; but it is necessary to give every one accused those benefits, lest the innocent should be punished.

#### JUST WHAT RED TAPE IS

Before going further it may be well to define just what we mean by the term "red tape." The phrase originated from the ancient custom of tying together the papers in any legal or departmental case with a band of red tape before filing. The delay and formality incidental to getting the documents out of their pigeon-hole, and the fastenings unwound, came to be characterized by the general term red tape. The definition given by the "Standard Dictionary" is:

Official procedure characterized by formality and delay.

This definition is comprehensive, and

expresses exactly what the average man means when he uses the words. It includes that kind of official routine which is necessary, as we have seen, and it also includes that kind of formality which is only vexatious, having been devised by minds that have all but lost their human characteristics and become mere card-indexes.

All the government bureaus, even when applying the necessary safeguards such as have been described, are more or less prone to fall into an overelaborated system of routine. This, at its worst, results in such ridiculous examples of circumlocution as we saw in the first example given.

Of course, it is easier to establish an inflexible system, and let it run itself, than to adapt oneself to the varying circumstances of different cases. For instance, it was easier for the clerk at desk No. 1, in our example, simply to mark the number of the form letter required on the communication which he received, and let a stenographer address an envelope and send it back, than it would have been to take the missive over to the other desk and explain the circumstances to the other clerk.

Moreover, there seems to be some subtle influence about department work which takes hold of a man's mind, makes him a slave of form, and eventually metamorphoses him into a kind of human filing-machine. But it is not our purpose to discuss the psychology of the government clerk. Doubtless many learned volumes could be written on that subject without exhausting it.

#### MULTIFARIOUS MAP-MAKING

Another tendency of the government bureaus which may be classed as red tape is the result of extreme specialization. Each bureau tends to become highly specialized, and to work in entire independence of other bureaus in similar lines of work.

A good example of this is found in the duplication of government maps. There

are eight or ten divisions of the different departments which are engaged from time to time in making maps of different sections of the United States.

To begin with, the Geological Survey is engaged in making a complete and elaborate set of topographic maps, which will finally cover the whole of the United States. The Coast and Geodetic Survey makes maps of the coast-line and adjacent territory. The Canada Boundary Survey makes maps of the international boundary-line and near-by districts. The Land Office makes maps of the public lands. The Forestry Service makes maps of the forest reserves and timbered regions. The Bureau of Soils makes soil surveys, which involve mapping the territory covered. The Interstate Commerce Commission makes railroad maps, and the Post-Office Department publishes postal maps.

Between all these different divisions and bureaus that are making maps there is very little cooperation, and the same territory is covered again and again for different purposes.

The map-making is only a single example. Speaking of this condition, Dr. George Otis Smith, director of the Geological Survey, said in an address delivered last April:

Here at the Federal capital we have twoscore scientific bureaus distributed through several executive departments. There exists no general plan or division of duties among these different agencies for public service, but as a fundamental policy we have pinned our faith to a sort of declaration of independence that all scientific bureaus were created free and equal, with the inevitable result that some fields of scientific investigation are occupied by two or more bureaus, other or less attractive fields are shunned, and others, perhaps, are claimed by those not best qualified to make the largest use of the opportunity for work.

This is the competitive system almost at its worst, because it is countenanced by men of scientific training and high ideals of public service.

Still another abuse which comes under the head of red tape is the delay, not due to any necessary measures of caution,

which is met with in too many of our government bureaus.

#### THE HUMAN INERTIA OF OFFICIALS

In more than one department, when a communication or application is received, the form reply goes out that it will be "taken up in due course"—which means that it must take its place at the bottom of a pile of items, in the consideration of which the clerk who handles them may be weeks or months behind. This is usually due to faulty administration, whereby one clerk has too much work and another not enough. It is also partly due to inefficient methods, and to the undeniable fact that the average departmental clerk has little personal interest in his work.

It is inevitable that a clerk working month after month at the same routine should become more or less of a machine. He gets into a state of mind where it makes little difference to him whether the task that he happens to have in hand is to-day's work, or last week's, or last month's. The work is all the same, and flows through his hands mechanically, like grist through a mill.

President Taft attempted to stir up the departments and remedy such conditions in 1912. He urged specific legislation looking toward efficient methods, and appointed an Economy and Efficiency Commission, which was expected to revolutionize departmental procedure; but the system proved to be too ancient and too ponderous to be changed in any material degree. After a short career for the commission Congress failed to appropriate for its continuance, and it died a painless death.

Another source of delay is the complicated division of authority, which frequently makes it necessary for a number of different officials to pass on the same matter. A striking example of this was recently brought to the attention of the writer.

A clerk in one of the departments wrote a letter answering a complaint that

had come in with regard to the administration of certain matters under that department's control. Under the system in effect, before the clerk could send out his reply, he had to secure the approval of four different men. It happened that all these men were a few days behind in their work.

The letter went to one of the four, lay on his desk for a few days, and then was read and approved. Next it went to another, and remained for some days on his desk. When it finally came back to the clerk who had written it, ready to be sent out, just twenty-two days had elapsed since it had been written.

In a private concern this would not have happened, for it would have been one man's business to write the letter and send it out promptly. In the government departments at Washington there is no such individual responsibility, and no one feels the blame if the matter is unduly delayed.

#### RED TAPE IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Still another kind of red tape is found in the elaborate precautions which govern transactions by citizens of this nation in foreign countries. Many business men are shy of foreign trade, because they do not like the elaborate formalities they are pretty sure to encounter. Most of these, however, must be classed as necessary red tape, and if the business man were at the other end he would doubtless be glad to have them strictly enforced.

For example, a man in California owns land in a South American country, and sells it to a friend living in the next block. At first thought it might appear that, since these two were the only parties to the transaction, no further formality should be needed than that which is required in an ordinary sale of land in the United States. But it must be remembered that the government of the South American country knows nothing of the parties, and has no jurisdiction over them. It does not know whether the sale was fraudulent or not. Hence, before the

title is transferred on its official records, it wants the formal assurance of the United States government that the transaction was regular and valid.

The procedure that would have to be gone through is as follows:

First, the deed would be executed before a clerk of the courts in the State of California, and would bear his official seal.

Next, the secretary of state for the State of California would certify to the authority of the clerk of the courts to execute such an instrument. He would also certify to the clerk's seal, annexing the seal of the State of California, and adding for good measure a little ribbon and such conventional devices as are customarily used in connection with the seal of that State.

Then the instrument is sent to the Secretary of State of the United States, and he, in turn, certifies to the seal of the State of California, puts on the great seal of the United States, and adds some more ribbon.

Finally it goes to the ambassador or minister in Washington of the country in which it is to be used, and he certifies

to the seal of the United States, and adds his own seal and still more ribbon.

By this time the paper is covered with gilt seals and red, white, and blue ribbons; and then and then only can it be accepted by the South American government and serve to transfer the title to a piece of land on that country's records. Perhaps the flourishes and the ribbons are unnecessary, but it will be seen that no less elaborate system of certification would fully protect the government which honors the document.

So we see that there is red tape and red tape—some of it necessary and good, some of it not so good, and some of it very bad. That which is bad the more conscientious officials at Washington are constantly striving to correct, but it will doubtless be with us more or less as long as governments exist.

Much of it is good, and could hardly be dispensed with. The citizen who is vexed by it should remember that Uncle Sam has a rather big job on his hands taking care of a hundred million people, and if he doesn't tie things up in red tape occasionally they are liable to be badly scattered.

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#### IF YOUTH BUT KNEW

If youth but knew the joy of life,  
The dear romance thereof,  
The wonders of the sunlit world,  
The majesty of love;

Then he would never trade his days  
For merchandise and gold,  
But he would gird his armor on  
Like a true knight of old;

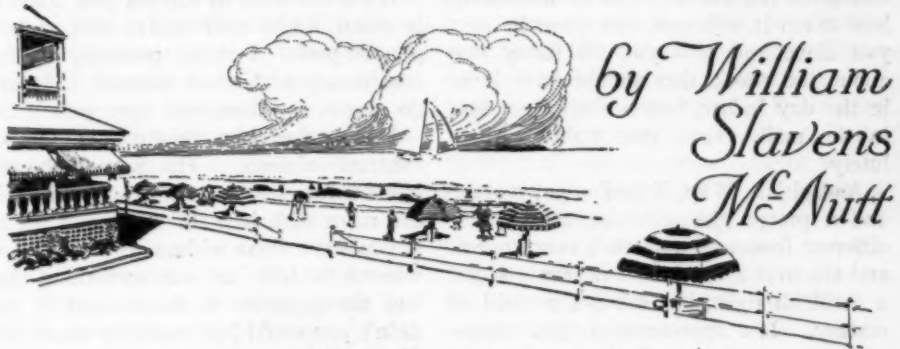
Then he would take his zither sweet  
While roses had their day,  
And clamber amorous garden-walls,  
And laugh and love and play.

When age was young and golden-haired  
He sold his youth like you—  
And now he hugs the fire and moans:  
"Alas, if youth but knew!"

*Harry Kemp*



# Poor Little Eddie



by William  
Slavens  
McNutt

**B**E helpless—that's what wins. Be a harmless, wide-eyed boob, and you won't have to rise early to get the money. No! All you have to do is lie in bed and wait for some sympathetic moneyed person to bring you plenty on a tray.

Let George do it—that's the idea. If you can't, there's always some George that will. Sure!

Of course, helpless stupidity is like every other accomplishment—you've got to be perfect to get the best results. You can't expect to have a silver spoon rammed down your throat if you're capable of guiding it to your lips by your own efforts. Oh, no! Nobody drops pennies into a cup held by a man owning one perfectly good eye. A blind man must be totally so to go into business for himself.

Same way with a boob that grows fat on his own folly—he must be a Simon-pure simp. He must believe politicians before an election and patent-medicine advertisements when he's sick. Absolutely! He must be of the order of intelligence that derives no amusement from political editorials in partizan newspapers. He must be the kind of a fellow that stops on a moonlight evening when a pretty girl tells him to.

If you know any man as foolish as all that, cultivate his friendship while he's young and accessible, because later on he'll have money to lend and so many office-boys as a body-guard in front of his door that no card but that of a very old friend or a millionaire can get through to him.

Brains are a misfortune, I tell you. If you have brains, you have to use them, and the use of brains is work, and work is a curse. Therefore, brains being a curse, the lack of them must necessarily be a blessing.

And good looks? Huh! If a man's good-looking, some girl with no more sense than to marry him just because he's handsome, will. Then, if he's a gentleman, he's got to work like a dog for the rest of his life, to make enough to atone, so far as he can with money—which is some distance—for the irreparable mistake his manly cow-lick caused her to make.

And money? Why, if you've got money to start with, you're nothing but shark-bait. You can't be friends with anybody. No! You're either an opportunity or a pest. The first time you knock at a man's door you're opportunity, and he comes on the run at the first tap and borrows money from you.



The next time you knock you're a pest, and he's not in.

If a man laughs at a funny story you tell, you don't get any pleasure from listening to his mirth. You're wondering how much it will cost you when he gets you alone and tells you his funny one about the check that should have been in the day before, but probably got lost in the mail. Isn't that right? Absolutely!

And girls! Why, if you've got money, and a pretty girl tells you that you're different from any man she's ever known, and sits over a few inches nearer, you get a thrill all right, but it's not a thrill of ecstasy. It's apprehension that makes you shiver. You recall that you've told her she waltzes nicely, and you call your lawyer out of bed to ask him how much she can collect on the strength of that remark. Isn't that right? Absolutely!

But a mouse-haired, fish-eyed, pigeon-toed, bow-legged, brain-shy, poverty-stricken boob is immune. He hasn't got anything that anybody wants, whereas everybody has something that he needs.

Everything comes his way. The law of supply and demand, I suppose; but it's discouraging to an industrious striver like myself, who's been brought up in a humble but Presbyterian atmosphere, to believe that the early bird gets the worm, when I sit by and see a worm too stupid to know when it's time to get up, fall out of his hole in the late afternoon, and gobble the classiest bird on the lawn!

## II

I HAVE Eddie May in mind when I speak of a boob. He's the model from which I draw my description.

And yet, come to think of it, Eddie's not so bad. He's not ugly enough to attract attention, nor bow-legged enough to be called deformed. His feet are cross-eyed, but not to such an extent but what his toes point in the general direction of his immediate destination. He knows that Christopher Columbus discovered America, and he can count and read,

and vote, and perform other little parlor tricks indicative of the possession of a certain something akin to human intelligence.

It's a bit hard to explain just what it is about Eddie that makes him such a perfect boob. I think, perhaps, it's the consistency of his low average. He can do almost anything not very well.

I remember him chiefly as a sort of concrete absence. He was flesh-and-blood substance, and yet you could sit in the room with him for hours and act as if you were alone without effort. If you wanted to talk, he was something that had the capacity to listen, and if you didn't you could just mentally erase him. If you didn't go out of your way to notice him, he wouldn't register on your consciousness at all.

The little shrimp roomed with me and Dick Scanlon at college. He was welcome, because we could remember him when the rent came due just long enough to collect his share of it, and then forget him for the rest of the time.

Of course, he did occupy a certain amount of space, but he didn't bother us any more than a bureau or desk that would have taken up the same room. Why, I'd ask Dick to run out and leave me alone for a time, and then, when he was gone, I'd compose love-letters under the inspiration of complete solitude, with Eddie sitting on the sofa watching me all the time.

There was only one thing that Dick and me had as little of as Eddie. That was money!

Our youth was the only license we had for being out of the poorhouse. Of course Dick and I had great futures. We've still got 'em. Poor Eddie didn't even have the promise of a brilliant career to cheer him while he worked the college for his way through.

Teaching was the only hope Eddie's very best friends had for him. Funny! Nobody ever advises a blind man to try for a position as a guide, but an educated boob who doesn't know enough to

get by at anything else is unanimously elected to teach.

Things financial got steadily worse with Eddie and Dick and me for three years. We started with nothing and went in debt. By the end of our junior year we all had plenty of debts, but no credit. It was up to us to coin our vacation or vacate permanently.

Dick and I might have hooked up with some beach as life-guards, and there was always the possibility of Eddie getting on as a waiter in a summer hotel; but after figuring a bit we decided that that wouldn't do. Life-savers get very little, whether they operate in the surf or the dining-room.

"Well, what 'll we do?" Eddie piped up, after Dick and I had settled what not to do. Eddie never suggested; he always asked.

"We'll use a little sense," Dick said. Of course we didn't, but he said we would. "Who is it," he asked, "that makes the most money—the man who does things or the man who sells things?"

"Cinch!" I told him. "The winner is the man who sells things that other people produce. Am I right?"

"You're as right as the city-hall clock," Dick complimented me. "We're going to sell things that other people produce."

"What things?" Eddie asked.

He was that way—a slave to petty details. He had no breadth of vision. His mind always dealt with little things.

"Anything," Dick told him. "It isn't the thing you have for sale that counts, it's the way you offer it. Now get that into your head, Eddie," he said. "It doesn't make any difference whether you've got ice in the Arctic or steam-heating plants in Panama. If you're a salesman, you'll sell 'em. If you're not a salesman, you couldn't sell gum-drops to an Eskimo. People don't buy what they need; they buy what the salesman makes them think they want. And if you can hypnotize them into buying one thing they haven't any use for, you can

another. I don't know or particularly care what we're going to sell this summer; we're going to sell something to somebody for more than it cost us to buy it from somebody else. That's success!"

So we weren't as careful in selecting our article of commerce as we might have been. Dick suggested books, but I balked. I pointed out to Dick that while I was willing to practise ordinary business dishonesty to get along in the world, there were depths of deceit I didn't feel capable of dropping to. After three years in college, I knew I couldn't look a man in the eye and advise him to buy a book. That was too much!

Dick argued that there was no sentiment in business, and that we shouldn't allow our personal prejudices, or likes and dislikes, to color our salesmanship in any way, or to affect our choice of an article to sell.

"You know, we're not going to buy ourselves something to keep," Dick told me. "We're going to buy something to get rid of. Doesn't it seem reasonable to believe that you could more easily sell something you have an aversion to than something you like? You've had your nose in some sort of a book for so long that your idea of a perfectly happy man is one who doesn't know the letters of the alphabet. Suppose you had books with you this summer. Wouldn't you work all the harder to get rid of them, feeling as you do?"

It seemed reasonable to believe that, but I didn't. I thought it would be nice to arrange with some motor company to act as automobile salesmen, and have them furnish us a sample car to travel around the country in and demonstrate with. Dick agreed with me, but no motor-car company would; so we compromised on patent potato-peelers.

### III

We were all genuinely enthusiastic about the merits of those machines. During our freshman year we'd all done our bit of barbering spuds at Mrs. Rari-

den's respectable boarding-house, in return for a pallid meal now and then; so we were capable of appreciating the fine points of Popple's Patent Potato-Peeler.

It was a sort of an adaptation of the safety-razor idea. A child, or even a cooking-school graduate, could handle it. It took all the art out of potato-peeling. You just took the instrument in one hand and the spud in the other, and thought about something else for a while. Then you glanced casually down at the spud, and—*presto*, you found it shaved as smooth as a con man's lip!

We figured on making quite a clean-up out of those vegetable safety-razors. In fact, Dick and I felt that if we were lucky we might make enough to afford a room without Eddie during our senior year. We both of us liked Eddie in a way, but we looked upon him as a sort of youthful frivolity. We felt that the loss of him would add to our dignity, and you know how prospective seniors have to reckon on those things.

But what do the common people care about progress, science, art, political economy? Nothing! That's why they're common. I talked to some of the commonest people during the first week we were on the road with those spud-skinners. Common people? I was just like a candidate to 'em; and all that any of them gave me was a pain!

Pay two bits for a little article absolutely indispensable to the successful conduct of any well-run household? Kick in with the price of a hair-cut for an invention as necessary to the orderly development of culinary science as strangers to Broadway? Part with twenty-five ordinary pennies, five nickels, two dimes and a jitney, the mere fourth part of an insignificant dollar, to save wife or cook from the danger of a lacerated hand and probable death from poisoning thereby?

Common people? Don't argue with me! I know the answer. I proved it to my own disgust. Say, if the fountain of youth was a potato-peeler and Ponce

de Leon was the common people, he wouldn't give a worthy young college man a postal-card to write home for money in exchange for a whole gross of them!

Sell Popple's Patent Potatò-Peelers? Why, we couldn't trade 'em for their weight in skimmed milk at a dairy-farm! Don't ever tell me farmers are suckers. If they're sea-food, they're crabs. Why, I used every form of argument from pure, cold, business logic to a consumptive cough, and all I got for my work was a variety of negative answers. A farmer can think up more mean ways of saying no than a total abstainer!

Dick and I at least held our own. If we couldn't lift the price of a patent potato-peeler from a wayside farm, we didn't stop off and try to lift the mortgage. Do you know what Eddie did? Just to show you—he let a woman up in northern Massachusetts tell him why she couldn't buy one of his patent potato-peelers to help a poor boy get a college education.

It was a sad story, mates. The year of the big wind it hadn't rained enough, and the year of the big rain there hadn't been any wind. Both years there hadn't been any crops. The only things she'd been able to raise on her little farm were nine kids and one hog. Her husband drank vile liquor and had the rheumatism. He and the hog had both been sick, and the old lady's luck ran true to form. It was the hog that died.

Well, Eddie loaned her his ears, and after she'd poured them full he gave her the ten dollars he had left. Then he hunted Dick and me up, and tried to make us weep with a second-hand version of the story he went broke on. That was Eddie—boob to the bone!

Dick and I had already decided to go to Paskamatqua Beach, a summer resort on the Maine coast about forty miles distant. A college man with a crease in his trousers and no pride can always make some sort of a living at a Maine beach. We had no intention of leaving

Eddie alone with himself, but we thought a good scare might instil into him a proper regard for the gentle art of self-preservation, and teach him the value of a deaf ear when impecunious ladies with rheumatic husbands and no hog tell hard-luck stories.

"I'm sorry you're broke, Eddie," I told him. "Dick and I would both like to help you out, but neither of us can. We're practically broke, too. We made a mistake in bringing patent potato-peelers with us; what we need is some kind of a scalpel to peel the surrounding farmer away from his money. Dick and I are going to Paskamatqua Beach to make a living. We've only got money enough between us for two tickets, so you see how it is."

"But what am I going to do?" Eddie asked. He spoke in such a pitiful way that I almost felt sorry for him. Eddie could arouse sympathy. "I haven't a cent, and I don't know where I can get one. You won't leave me alone, will you?"

"You might go back to the lady you gave the ten to, and ask her for a job," Dick suggested. "There ought to be some left-overs now that the hog is dead. The prodigal son got by on husks."

"But he had an address to wire to when they disagreed with him," Eddie pointed out. "I haven't."

"Try beating your way to the beach, Eddie," I advised him. "We'll help you. You get on the train with us, and we'll turn two seats together. You scrooch down on the floor between them, and we'll pile our suit-cases around you. Then we'll put our coats over you and take a chance."

"You'll take a chance!" Eddie said. "You! What chance do you take?"

"Why, think of the embarrassment we should suffer if we're found in the company of a hobo," Dick explained. "We're taking all the chances; you're not taking any. You've got nothing to lose. If they catch you, all they can do is to put you off the train. Wherever

they dump you, you won't be any worse off than you are here. You can't lose!"

So Eddie got on the train with us and huddled up between the seats. We stacked the suit-cases around him and spread our coats over them.

The other passengers in the car were interested in watching us. One fat, red-faced fellow right across the aisle, with a diamond in his tie the size of an early strawberry, was particularly curious. Dick tapped his forehead, to indicate that our traveling-companion was suffering from an absence of tenants on the upper floor.

Then the conductor came along, and Dick showed him three tickets to Paskamatqua Beach. The conductor looked at Dick, and then at me, and then at the three tickets.

"Who's the other ticket for?" he asked.

Dick took the coats off the top of the suit-cases and pointed at poor little Eddie, all doubled up on the floor and looking at the conductor like a rabbit in a trap sizing up a hungry dog. The conductor leaned over and looked down at him.

"What's he doing down there on the floor?" he asked.

"He's peculiar," Dick explained. "He likes to ride that way."

"Well, there's no law against it," the conductor admitted; "but if he gets violent I shall hold you two responsible for him!"

Eddie never did have a sense of humor. He couldn't see anything funny in the situation, even after we explained it to him in detail; but I thought the fat, red-faced fellow across the aisle would melt himself laughing. I actually feared for him.

Eddie was mad at all of us, but particularly so at the fat fellow who was having hysterics. The fat fellow saw how Eddie felt about it, and gave him some good advice.

"Don't get mad, my boy," he said in the tone of a man giving a baccalaureate



address. "I can tell by the look of you that you haven't the faculty for entering into the spirit of things. That's bad! Be a mixer. I have to be in my business, and I know the commercial value of it. Always be ready to appreciate a good joke, whether it's on the other fellow or on you. Never be discomfited and grouchy!"

And just then—whango! The train we were on started an argument over the issue of right of way with another train coming in the opposite direction on the same track.

#### IV

To us, in the coaches, the collision seemed like the production of an imaginative person's conception of the end of the world. I bounced around between the floor and the roof until what was left of the thing that had been a train once more established a comparative equilibrium. Then I crawled out through a ragged absence of floor, and took a look at the corn-field we had entered and broken. We hadn't plowed quite as much of that field as the farmer had, but we'd gone deeper. I gave thanks for my deliverance and resolved to start going to church again.

Just then Dick crawled beside me.

"Eddie's pinned down," he gasped. "Give me a hand with him!"

So I crawled back inside, and we started trying to lift things off poor Eddie. There was an awful lot on him. And what a screaming came from underneath! It sent the shivers up and down my spine to hear it.

"Don't yell so, Eddie!" I begged. "We'll have you out in a minute."

We had taken enough carpentry and upholstery off him by that time to enable him to twist his head around. He looked up at me and said:

"I'm not yelling. What you hear is this humorist under me laughing at another joke."

It was the fat man! Eddie was bedded down on him as comfortable as a Persian

princess on forty-seven sofa-pillows. The fat man was speaking extemporaneously, and the form of his remarks was an argument for the use of a manuscript. The tenor of his speech was something like this:

"Save me! Save me! Help! Help! Take your foot out of my eye! You're gouging my ear off! Oh, Lord, I'm dying! Now I lay me down to sleep—quit digging your knee into my stomach, will you? If I ever get up out of this I'll knock your block! Oh, Lord, I'm dying! Help!"

There wasn't a thing holding him down but Eddie. As soon as we got Eddie loose the fat one could have got up all right; but I thought of the big diamond in his tie, and of my own destitute condition. When I lifted Eddie off him, I slipped a stray seat-back on, and knelt on it to give it weight.

"Are you in much pain?" I asked him.

"I'm dying!" he said. "I can feel myself getting weaker. Can't you save me?"

"There's a heavy timber across your back," I told him. "We'll do our best. Have courage! We won't desert you."

"I just want a crack at that sharp-angled fool who used me for a mattress," he wailed. "Oh, Lord, I'm dying! Help! Save me!"

After I'd sat for a while on the seat-back I'd laid across him, in order to make the rescue seem more difficult, and Dick and I had both heaved and groaned as if we were straining our ligaments to free him from the death-trap in which he was imprisoned, I got up and we saved him.

He wasn't much hurt. Between cussing Eddie and praying, he'd injured his vocal chords somewhat; but aside from that and a few bruises he was all right. He was peeved because we wouldn't let him lick Eddie.

"The little rabbit used my face for a foot-rest," he complained. "When the crash came, he picked out my softest spots and settled down on 'em. Don't



tell me he didn't do it purposely! If he'd had an osteopath's map of my anatomy he couldn't have picked out the tender places better. It was cold-blooded, scientific, intentional torture, I tell you!"

But we finally cooled him off and he introduced himself. He was Roland B. Kemmer, proprietor of the Bonavita Hotel at Paskamatqua Beach.

"You gentlemen saved my life," he told Dick and me. "Any time I can do anything for you, just let me know."

I spoke for our side. I didn't dictate or even suggest just what he should do for us, but I intimated that almost anything would be welcome, and that there was no time like the present.

"It's fate!" Kemmer declared. "I can use you two boys to our mutual advantage. We need presentable young men at the beach—young college men who can dance and play tennis, handle a canoe conservatively, and flirt discreetly. We've been frightfully shy of men this year. That's bad, very bad! Where there are no men, the women leave; and where the women have left, no men will come. The absence of men at a summer hotel is apt to be the first link in a chain of misfortune that leads directly to bankruptcy. Come with me! I'll give you free room and board at the hotel, all the privileges of the place, and a salary of—say twenty dollars a week for the summer. In return you have a good time, and see to it that the young ladies stopping at my hostelry do the same. Agreeable?"

Agreeable? Could he ask such a question and keep a straight face? I looked at Dick, and Dick looked at me, and then we both looked at Eddie. That was a mistake. If we hadn't looked at him we might have been able to leave him. Poor little Eddie!

His expression of pitiful appeal would have made a cat stay in a dog-kennel. I wanted to leave him, but I couldn't. His utter helplessness preyed on my conscience.

What would he do if we left him? Starve, probably! Sit out in the open and patiently wait for death, like the boob he was! If he'd had just a modicum of sense—enough, say, to know better than to waste his time pounding sand in a rat-hole, I could have laughed harshly and done my duty by myself; but he didn't. There he stood, a helpless, hopeless, pitiful boob, waiting to be left to his fate.

The claim for protection that his helplessness presented compelled me to take a chance with the first law of nature.

"Will it be possible for you to make use of our friend in some way?" I asked Kemmer. "He's with us, and I feel responsible for him in a way."

"Use him?" Kemmer shouted. "Him? I'll give him good money to hang by the heels and let me use him for a punching-bag! He deliberately stuck his foot in my eye, I tell you! Use him? I'll pay his way if he'll go down to old man Carlson's hotel, at the other end of the beach from us, and hoodoo the place!"

I didn't try to defend Eddie. What was the use? There's no sense in arguing that two and two don't make four.

"I know," I said. "But he doesn't mean any harm, and he's with us, you see. We can't very well leave him."

"Admirable!" Kemmer said. "Shows a splendid spirit of loyalty. Too bad it's wasted on such a poor cause! Well, if he'll obey my orders, I'll give him his board and room, but no salary. We have some elderly ladies at the Bonavita who enjoy croquet and leisurely strolls. I can use him as an escort for them. They frequently require some one to carry their lunches and camp-stools for them."

"I'm sure you can depend upon me to do my best," Eddie said humbly. "I'm sorry I put my foot in your eye, sir."

"If you didn't have two good friends to intercede for you, you'd be a darn sight sorrier!" Kemmer blustered. "I don't want you around, but I'm going to

try and put up with you as a favor to your two friends, who saved my life while you were trying to murder me."

So the three of us went with Kemmer to the Bonavita Hotel at Paskamatqua Beach. Dick and I got right into the swim as regular bathers, and Eddie took up his duties as the old ladies' life-guard. While Dick and I swam and played tennis and golf and danced and canoed with as fine a bunch of peacherinoes as ever troubled a boarding-school, Eddie carried chairs and tables for the hens who had ceased to cackle when they laid a birthday, and did his bit with croquet-mallets and parasols. Between times he sat on the veranda and read nice novels out loud to his flock.

## V

THE first week in July, Clarice Claremont, the musical-comedy star, arrived at the Bonavita. She said she'd come for a rest, but Dick and I didn't give her any. She was a corking good fellow, and we had some great times together for a couple of weeks. Dick and I had co-operated up to the time when she arrived, but she developed a certain amount of competition between us.

Then Kemmer's niece, Helen Ardsley, arrived from the West, and our friendship entirely ceased. So did our attentions to Miss Claremont.

Miss Ardsley was an orphan, and while it was evident from the way she dressed and acted that she was more or less of a poor relation, we both noticed that Kemmer was very fond of her. There was a strong probability that he might do pretty well by the man who married his niece.

Not that that had anything whatever to do with my feelings, or Dick's—positively not! With both of us it was a case of love at first sight, and fair play go hang! She was about twenty, a tall, quiet, reserved girl, with light hair and big blue eyes, and as pretty as—oh, what's the use? She was to her sex what Shelley is to poets. Turn your imagina-

tion loose with that for a tip. You can't go too far.

Within a week Dick and I were as popular with all the rest of the girls at the place as a divorced husband at his ex-wife's second wedding. When Dick was out with Miss Ardsley, I was too miserable to bother with anybody else. When I was out with her, Dick would sit in his room and read Poe.

Several of the girls we'd been attentive to left the hotel in somewhat of a huff, and in my rare, lucid moments, when I was temporarily able to forget Miss Ardsley, it occurred to me that Kemmer had a kick coming. However, he seemed satisfied with the way things were going. He was fond of his niece, and I suppose he was gratified by the court we paid her, even if it did cost him a few guests.

Miss Claremont was the only one of our former playmates who didn't get offended. She was so nice and sympathetic that I used to hunt her up and knock Dick when he had Miss Ardsley out. Dick employed the same means of solace when I was the lucky one. She'd tell me what Dick said about me, and then tell Dick what I said about him. She was nice that way.

After a few days Dick and I quit speaking to each other, and only conversed through her. Then she asked me to do her a favor.

"Anything," I promised fervently. "Anything you ask."

Isn't it funny? When a man's in love he'll promise anything fervently, not only to the one he's in love with, but to anybody else. Love seems to be a kind of promissory mood, doesn't it?

"I want you to help me in a little press-agent stunt," she said. "My husband's coming on Monday—"

"Your husband!" I said, with a foolish expression. "Your husband!"

"Yes," she said. "Didn't you know I was married? I thought every one knew that. Jack's a dear! Don't you remember reading how he horsewhipped

that Italian count who was attentive to me? No? The story went all over the country. Jack's supposed to be murderously jealous of me. Of course, he's not—he knows he's the only man in the world I ever give a thought to—but it makes good press stuff. Now, I want you to take me out sailing on Monday morning. We'll sail out beyond the reef to Perch Island, and go ashore there for a few hours. Jack will arrive a little before noon, and will ask for me. When he finds out I've gone sailing with you, he'll storm around and make a terrible disturbance. Then he'll pace up and down the beach, waiting for us to come back. We'll get back about sunset, and Jack will make a most frightful scene."

I was as dumb as a man in love usually is.

"But if you know he's coming, why get caught?" I asked.

"Press stuff, silly!" she said. "Well-known actress—ardent college boy—jealous husband—don't you see it?"

"I see the scene," I told her, "but not with myself as any part of the scenery!"

"But you said you'd do anything for me," she reminded me.

"Anything but that," I qualified my proffer of assistance.

I was thinking of Miss Ardsley. I'd have a fine chance with her after being mixed up in a mess like that, wouldn't I? Thinking of Miss Ardsley naturally reminded me of Dick, who was playing tennis with her at the time.

"Ask Dick," I advised Miss Claremont.

"I did," Miss Claremont said. "He recommended you."

The unprincipled trickster! Trying to get me in wrong with Helen Ardsley!

Then I had an inspiration. Eddie! Why not? Of course, Eddie had a perfectly good reputation, but it didn't do him a particle of good. It was reasonable to assume that the loss of it wouldn't do him any harm, wasn't it? Absolutely!

So I nominated Eddie, and Miss Claremont and I elected him unanimously. We decided not to tell him what his duties would be.

"Why worry him?" I asked Miss Claremont. "If he doesn't know what's coming off, he'll act the part all the better. He'll be more convincing in it. Then it'll be fun to watch him when he thinks he's in danger of being murdered by an irate husband!"

"I'd better be seen with him as much as possible between now and Monday," Miss Claremont said. "Sort of work up Jack's entrance, you know."

## VI

WORK it up? She exploded it! Woof! I've heard some scandal in my time, but never any as juicy as the gossip resulting from the friendship that suddenly sprang up between Miss Claremont and poor little Eddie.

Of course, the friendship didn't really spring up; Miss Claremont reared it—carefully. And, also of course, it wasn't a friendship; it was a combination of hypnotic terror and business expediency. Eddie was hypnotized and terrified, while Miss Claremont was simply working at her trade.

And the things that were said of Miss Claremont! Tell me, why do all women hate an actress? Oh, yes, they do! All women hate actresses they've met. I know they write notes to some they've never seen off the stage, but after they once get as much as an introduction they write notes about them. Why? Sour grapes?

Anyhow, what the ladies at the Bonavita, married, single, young, and otherwise, said about Miss Claremont after she took up with Eddie would have scorched the ears of an asbestos idol.

She was delighted with the way people had taken notice.

"It couldn't be better," she told me. "Poor little Eddie's been the old ladies' friend for so long that his sudden attachment to a wicked actress stirs up

real talk. You know," she said, "if a bartender marries a burlesque queen, it's hardly worth a mention; but if a Methodist minister elopes with a show-girl, it's good for columns, and the A. P. wires get all choked up with the horrible details. Of course, Eddie isn't a minister, but he ought to be. He's the shyest man! I have to locate him every morning by keen deduction, and kidnap him by force. If he could escape me by guile or main strength, he would. If he's ever been kissed, some female brute must have sneaked up on him when he wasn't looking, and held him helpless. I'm only afraid he'll run out on me before Jack gets here!"

Helen Ardsley was as indignant over poor little Eddie's capture by the Thespian enemy as anybody. She besought me to do something about it before it was too late.

"He seems such a nice boy," she said. "It's a shame! I know he hasn't taken up with that woman of his own accord. She's hypnotized him. Heretofore he's always been so courteous and attentive to the elderly ladies at the hotel, and now he spends his entire time with that hussy! And I know he doesn't do it willingly, either. I can see by his expression when he's with her that he's ashamed."

"It'll do Eddie good," I assured her. "He needs experience. Poor little Eddie! I don't think he ever went twice with the same girl before; never could find one foolish enough to repeat the mistake of going out with him. He's all right, but he's simple."

I didn't realize how simple he was till he came to me with his trouble.

"I don't love Miss Claremont, old man," he said, as solemn as a sign-painter talking about art. "And I'm afraid she's becoming attached to me. I wouldn't cause her pain for the world. I've tried to make her see that I can never return her love, but she insists on my going about with her. I simply can't marry her."

"Why not?" I asked him. "She seems a nice girl."

"I love another," he said, like a man making his last statement. "I love another."

That was the first time I ever had a real case of hysterics.

"I didn't know you'd ever had a girl, Eddie," I said, when I'd recovered sufficiently to speak. "I never saw you twice with the same one."

"I am poor," Eddie said. "I am unworthy. I have never told her of my love; but I love her!"

That was like him! If he ever loved a girl, he wouldn't tell her. He'd keep it a secret. Boob to the bone, I tell you—absolutely!

## VII

Dick had a date with Helen Ardsley on the morning of the Monday when husband Jack was to arrive and yell for lover Eddie's gore, so I rose early and went for a long, lone walk to nurse black thoughts and hatred for the double-dyed villain who had once been my friend.

I got back to the hotel a little before noon, in order to be on hand for Jack's entrance. Miss Claremont met me on the veranda.

"It's all off!" she told me sorrowfully. "Eddie ran out on me. He promised to take me sailing this morning as per schedule, but he's gone!"

"Must be around some place," I said. "I'll hunt him up. There's still time for him to take you sailing before your husband gets here."

Miss Claremont shook her head.

"He's gone, I tell you. Think I haven't hunted for him? He took the train for Portsmouth last night. A good story all gone to pot!"

Just then Dick came up and looked me over as if I were a sickness he was afraid of having.

"Pretty smart, aren't you?" he sneered.

"Yes," I admitted. "You just find it out?"



"I've just found out that you're treacherous!" he said. "You knew that I had a date with Miss Ardsley this morning."

"Certainly," I said. "What of it?"

"Where is she?" he asked.

"How do I know?" I returned.

"Didn't she go walking with you?" Dick inquired.

"No," I said. "Didn't she go with you?"

"No," Dick replied.

Then the house automobile from the noon train drove up, and we found out where Helen Ardsley was. She was right there—with Eddie.

We knew before he told us. A man looks as foolish as that only once in a lifetime, unless he's married twice.

"My wife!" Eddie blatted. "My wife! We were married last night in Portsmouth."

We followed them inside and watched Kemmer get his shock. I was looking for him to rave at Eddie, but he was strangely amiable. I didn't understand it then, but I did later.

"I'm so happy, boys!" Helen Ardsley—I mean Mrs. May, dog-gone it!—told us. "Do you know, I proposed to Eddie! I suppose I ought to be ashamed of that, but as a matter of fact I'm proud of it! I knew he loved me all the time, and I also knew that he was too bashful to speak. He's the finest man in the world, but he lacks self-confidence. He doesn't realize what a perfectly splendid fellow he is. He felt himself unworthy of me, and wouldn't court me at all. Wasn't that silly of him? I have that horrible Miss Claremont to thank for my happiness. If it hadn't been for her shameless attempt to win him, I should never have got up the courage to speak; but I wasn't going to stand by and see the man whom I loved, and who I knew loved me, dragged down by that dreadful person! Oh, boys, I'm so happy about everything! I could almost forgive Miss Claremont. You know, I'm really the first and only woman Eddie ever

loved. He's such a dear! And so modest! Oh!"

Well, that was about all that I could stand at one time. I drifted out on the veranda, and Dick followed me. We'd just got done shaking hands and renewing our friendship when Kemmer came up.

He looked awfully blue—almost as blue as I felt. I didn't blame him. Terrible thing to have a pill like Eddie married on you!

"Between us we sort of spilled the beans, boys," he said gloomily. "I was rather hoping one of you two would catch on with my niece."

"We were rather hoping the same thing," I admitted. "I suppose you'll have to give Eddie something to do around the hotel to support him. He hasn't a thing, you know."

"Give him something to do around the hotel?" Kemmer gasped. "Give him—you're crazy! I get a salary for running this place. My brother-in-law—my niece's father—put this hotel up before he died, just to give me something to do. Not a nickel's worth of it belongs to me. She owns it, and this is only a little plaything of hers. It would take an expert accountant six months to figure up all she owns. Why, you boob, I'm only a poor relation of hers! I was hoping she might marry one of you two boys, because I thought you might be friendly to me afterward. Give Eddie something to do around the hotel? Why, I'm scared stiff for fear he'll remember some of the things I've said to him, and have me fired!"

Be a boob, I tell you—that's what wins. I admit I have brains and good looks, and I still have my future, but—ah, but! Eddie's in Florida at his winter home. I'm in debt at my tailor's, and haven't got any home that I can lay claim to if I miss paying the rent for a week.

Be a boob, I tell you. Be helpless—that's the idea. Poor little Eddie! Waugh!



# THE PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

FRANK

OWEN

PAYNE

OF all the great men who have played a momentous part in the history of the modern world, there is probably none of whom so much has been written and said, but of whom so little is positively known, as the discoverer of America.

We have a considerable collection of the letters and the writings of Christopher Columbus. He was known to many of the statesmen and historians of his day, who put on record some interesting incidents of his life. A whole library of books has been produced by later investigators. And yet we do not know where or when he was born; there is uncertainty as to the resting-place of his remains; there is controversy as to his real name and the race to which he belonged.

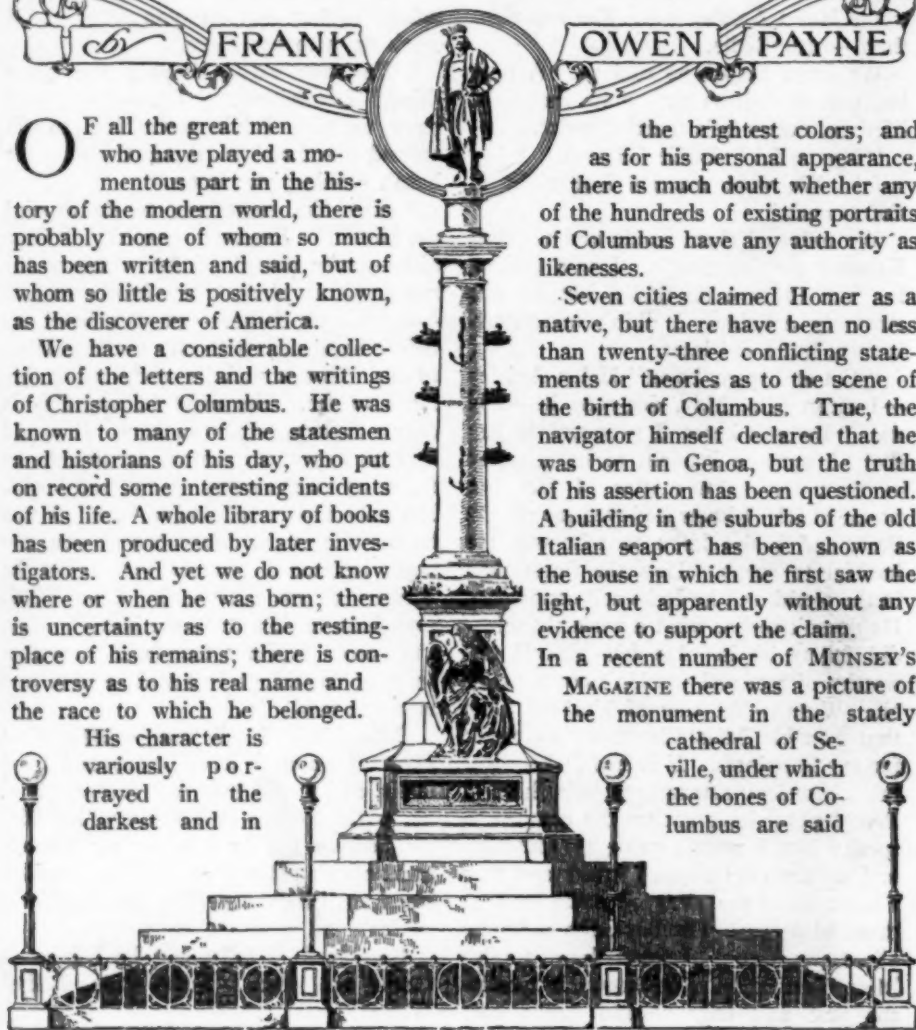
His character is variously portrayed in the darkest and in

the brightest colors; and as for his personal appearance, there is much doubt whether any of the hundreds of existing portraits of Columbus have any authority as likenesses.

Seven cities claimed Homer as a native, but there have been no less than twenty-three conflicting statements or theories as to the scene of the birth of Columbus. True, the navigator himself declared that he was born in Genoa, but the truth of his assertion has been questioned. A building in the suburbs of the old Italian seaport has been shown as the house in which he first saw the light, but apparently without any evidence to support the claim.

In a recent number of MÜNSEY'S MAGAZINE there was a picture of the monument in the stately

cathedral of Seville, under which the bones of Columbus are said



to rest, having been brought from Havana in 1898, when Spain relinquished her sovereignty in Cuba. But in Santo Domingo, where the great sailor's body lay from 1540 to 1796, the priests of the cathedral assert that they still have it, another corpse having been secretly substituted when it was supposed to have been transferred to Havana.

To touch very briefly upon the controversy as to the character of Columbus, Washington Irving and Prescott praise him to the skies, while Justin Winsor declares these historians to have been guilty of most extravagant hero-worship. De Lorgues pronounces Columbus to have been a saint, but Aaron Goodrich accuses him of cupidity, ingratitude, arrogance, perfidy, and treachery, and asserts that his prevailing traits were hypocrisy and deceit combined with cowardice and cruelty.

In the face of such contradictory pronouncements, one is forced to use one's own judgment in forming an opinion of this remarkable man, whose genius and perseverance opened up a new world to civilization. It is an unquestioned fact that for four centuries he has stood as the embodiment of patient, persistent effort, of untiring enthusiasm and zeal. Until more convincing evidence to the contrary can be found, he will continue to be what he has been—a shining example to the youth of all lands, inspiring each new generation with hope and con-

fidence and ambition to strive nobly for great ideals.

#### THE PORTRAITS OF COLUMBUS

It is a universal desire among men to know how the great characters of the past appeared as they walked among their

fellows. About five hundred different portraits of Columbus are known to collectors, but there is no proof that any one of them was painted or drawn from life. There is no record that he ever sat to an artist, and one of his most careful biographers declares that all the existing portraits are based on nothing more than "pure fancy." They certainly differ in the most extraordinary way, as will be seen from the specimens reproduced on these pages.

Whether there is



THE SO-CALLED JOMARD PORTRAIT OF COLUMBUS, IN THE MUNICIPAL MUSEUM AT VICENZA, SAID TO BE THE WORK OF TITIAN

or is not a truthful presentment among them, most of them must be utterly inaccurate.

There is a verbal description of Columbus by his son Fernando, which ought to be trustworthy. Moreover, in many respects, though not in all respects, it tallies with what we learn from four other authorities. It tells us that the navigator was of more than medium stature, well formed, neither lean nor corpulent, of long visage, with high cheekbones. His nose was aquiline, his eyes light, his complexion fair and of a "lively color." His son says that his hair became white at the age of thirty, but the Spanish historian Oviedo, who saw him in Bar-



PORTRAIT OF COLUMBUS IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, SAID TO HAVE BEEN PAINTED IN 1519 BY SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO

celona after the first voyage, says that his hair was red.

#### THE JOMARD PORTRAIT

Any representation of Columbus which shows characteristics radically different from these cannot be accepted as a faithful portrait of the man.

Nine of the most interesting portraits are reproduced here. The first, on page 49, was found at Vicenza, in northern Italy, by M. Jomard, librarian of the National Library in Paris. It is attributed—just upon what evidence does not appear—to the brush of the great Venetian painter Titian. It is not at all

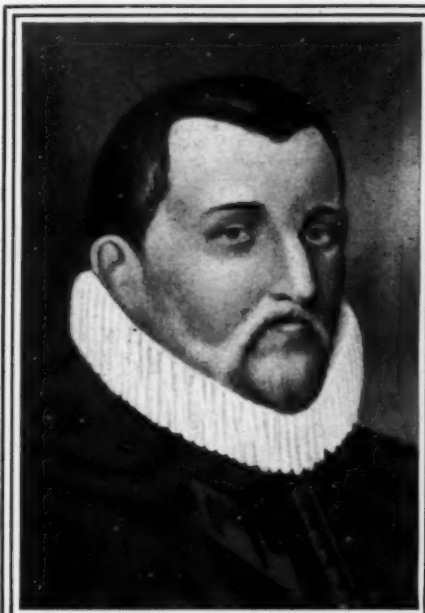
impossible that Titian may have painted a picture of Columbus, for he executed many commissions for two Spanish kings—the great Charles V and his son Philip II; but it is practically certain that he never saw the navigator, who died before Titian's fame had spread beyond his own province.

Whatever may be its claim to authenticity, this portrait is markedly unlike other representations of Columbus. It shows the "long visage" of the verbal description already quoted, but in other respects it suggests an Elizabethan courtier rather than any accepted impression of the great sailor's personality.

On page 50 is an engraving of a fine portrait now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. If the recorded pedigree of this picture is correct, it was painted in 1519 by Sebastiano del Piombo, one of the great Venetian artists of the Renaissance. It was presented to the museum by the late J. Pierpont Morgan, who purchased it from the col-



THE MUÑOZ PORTRAIT OF COLUMBUS, OWNED BY THE DUKE OF VERAGUA, A LINEAL DESCENDANT OF THE NAVIGATOR



THE MORO PORTRAIT OF COLUMBUS, OWNED BY MR. GUNTHER, OF CHICAGO, AND SAID TO HAVE BEEN PAINTED IN 1543-1545

lection of the Duc de Talleyrand Valençay et Sagan. Like Titian, Sebastiano del Piombo can scarcely have seen Columbus, but a possible line of connection between them may be traced from the fact that the Venetian was among the painters who received commissions to decorate the church of San Pietro in Montorio, at Rome, founded by the navigator's royal patrons, Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain.

The next engraving, on this page, shows a portrait which belongs to the Duke of Veragua, a lineal descendant of Columbus. It was executed by a Spanish painter, Sebastiano Muñoz, who flourished in the latter part of the seventeenth century. As the navigator had then been dead for nearly two hundred years, it cannot claim historical authority, and it is quite unlike the more generally accepted representations.

#### THE ANTONIO MORO PORTRAIT

It must be admitted, however, that there is some similarity between the

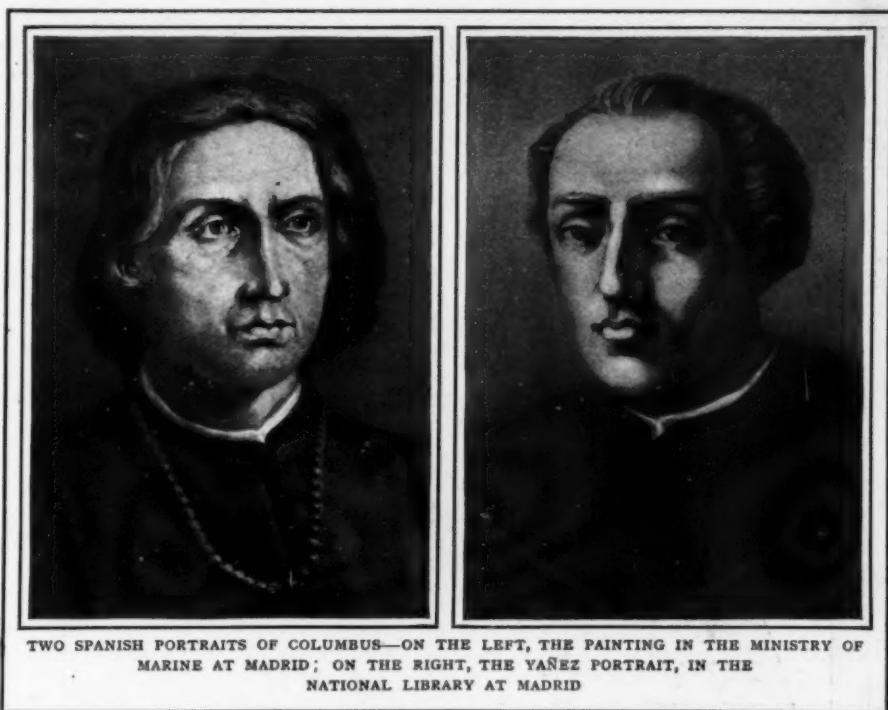
Muñoz picture and the next one in our series, that by Antonio Moro, which has a long and interesting history. Its present owner, Mr. Charles F. Gunther, of Chicago, claims for this portrait that it was painted during the years 1543-1545, when Moro made his first visit to the court of Madrid, and that it is based upon

a miniature for which Christopher Columbus himself "undoubtedly sat." The evidence for these assertions seems to be mainly traditional, but it was accepted by Washington Irving, who chose the Moro work for the frontispiece of his "Life and Times of Christopher Columbus," and spoke of it thus:



THE LORENZO LOTTO PORTRAIT OF COLUMBUS, WHICH IS DATED 1512, AND WHICH IS NOW THE PROPERTY OF MR. JAMES ELLSWORTH, OF NEW YORK





TWO SPANISH PORTRAITS OF COLUMBUS—ON THE LEFT, THE PAINTING IN THE MINISTRY OF MARINE AT MADRID; ON THE RIGHT, THE YAÑEZ PORTRAIT, IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY AT MADRID

The portrait of Columbus prefaced to the present volume is from a beautiful picture painted by Sir Anthony Moro for Margaret, governess of the Netherlands. It was brought to this country [England] about the year 1590, and has been in possession of one family until very recently, when it was purchased by Mr. Cribb, of King Street, Covent Garden, London.

The characteristics of the mind and features of Columbus are so forcibly depicted in this picture that no doubt can remain but that it is a true and perfect resemblance of the great navigator.

The exclusion of all possible doubt in regard to a matter so difficult of actual proof would appear to be somewhat arbitrary, but Mr. Gunther's picture is a valuable and interesting one.

#### THE LORENZO LOTTO PORTRAIT

Another fine painting of Columbus is owned by an American collector—the Lorenzo Lotto portrait, which was exhibited at the Columbian Exposition in 1893, and which is now the property of Mr. James Ellsworth, of New York. An engraving of it appears on page 52.

It is noteworthy, not to say curious, that so many of the older portraits of Columbus should be identified as the work of Venetian painters whose early life was contemporary with the navigator's last years. Lotto was born in or about 1480, and this work is dated 1512—six years after the death of Columbus. It has a record of ownership by the steward of Margaret of Parma—illegitimate daughter of Charles V, and already mentioned in the quotation from Washington Irving—and subsequently by several titled European families. As a likeness, in spite of a certain touch of weakness in the pictured face, it may be classed with the Sebastiano del Piombo portrait, and with that in the Ministry of Marine at Madrid, to be noticed shortly. It tallies fairly well with the descriptions of Columbus, and with the most generally approved idea of his appearance.

Most modern historical painters who have had occasion to depict Columbus

seem to have accepted this type of face. A notable instance is to be found in Vaczlav Brozik's celebrated picture of the navigator soliciting the aid of Queen Isabella—one of the countless picturesque incidents with which fiction has embellished history. John Vanderlyn, however, in his well-known "Landing of Columbus," painted for the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington, seems to have followed the Jomard or possibly the Parmigiano

portrait, for he has given his hero a longish beard.

#### TWO SPANISH PORTRAITS OF COLUMBUS

Both of the portraits reproduced on page 53 are in Madrid, and both are among the most familiar pictures of Columbus. Again, however, there is no proof of their authenticity.

The first of the two was painted for the Spanish Ministry of Marine as one of



THE MONTANUS ENGRAVING, SAID TO HAVE BEEN MADE FROM A PORTRAIT OF COLUMBUS PAINTED BY A GERMAN ARTIST AT NUREMBERG IN 1661

a series of famous admirals, but the official authorities possess no further data as to its origin. It is known to have been executed long after the navigator's death, and must be either a copy of some older portrait or a work of the artist's imagination. The face, however, seems to agree with the quoted description of Columbus.

The Yañez portrait is in the National Library, Madrid. When acquired for that collection it showed Columbus with a fur collar; but as there was evidence that this detail had been added by the brush of a later and inferior painter, it was decided to remove it. The result, as will be seen, corresponds closely with the same part of the portrait in the Ministry of Marine.

#### THE MONTANUS ENGRAVING

The Montanus engraving, printed on page 54, is said to have been taken from a painting executed by a German artist at Nuremberg, in 1661. Its chief interest lies in its almost complete dissimilarity to all the rest of the series, and it is presented here chiefly as an illustration of the extraordinary diversity of the portraits of Columbus. One can scarcely believe that the strenuous and daring explorer who discovered America could possibly have had the heavy, expressionless features given him by this Teutonic painter.

Equally unsatisfactory is the weak and almost effeminate Columbus that looks cut at us from the portrait shown on this page. This is a reproduction of a



THE PARMIGIANO PORTRAIT OF COLUMBUS, IN  
THE NATIONAL MUSEUM AT NAPLES

canvas that hangs in the large but not very interesting collection of paintings in the National Museum of Naples. It is a work of Francesco Maria Mazzola, better known as Parmigiano, who was only three years old when the navigator died, and it seems safe to set it down as being purely a work of fancy.

Parmigiano is known to have been none too conscientious an artist. For instance, he was imprisoned at Bologna in 1537 for accepting payment for a series of frescoes and then failing to execute them.

Whatever may have been the actual physical semblance of the discoverer of America, we have a right to expect to see in all portraits of him something of that strength of character which made him travel so insistently from country to country seeking assistance in his great undertaking, and something of that dignified and noble bearing which enabled him to withstand the derision of the wise men of his time, the wrath of the elements, and the mutiny of his companions.

Columbus has been too often considered as one who went out to find the Indies and stumbled accidentally upon an unknown world. This is not a fair statement of his achievement. He went out to seek "the islands of Antipodia," and he "sailed on" until he found the thing he sought. Only in those portraits which give him a strong and noble cast of countenance can we find a satisfying likeness of this remarkable man.



SKETCH FOR A PICTURE CARD BY ONE OF THE SOLDIER-ARTISTS OF THE BEAUX ARTS

"ME," wrote Alexandre, "I'm so full of holes that it makes an uncomfortable draft, but I'm all right otherwise!"

Before the war broke out, Alexandre was a student in the *École des Beaux Arts*, in Paris. He was going to be a great painter some day. So they all agreed—even Alexandre himself, in the depths of his heart. But, as yet, he was celebrated rather for his wit than for his prowess with the brush.

That unshakable gaiety of his, however, was a point of honor. Often, he didn't have quite enough to eat. Every now and then he had to leave his beloved *école* and go out and find a job, in order to keep from starving. But one doesn't mope, when one is poor, any more than one adopts a toplofty air because of the dreams and visions one cherishes in his soul.

And now Alexandre had one wound in his head, another in his right shoulder, and yet a third in his left thigh. They

thought he was dead when they picked him up. But no! It was the same old Alexandre.

The Latin Quarter was full of Alexandres in that tragic August of 1914, especially the great school at the corner of the Quai Malaquais and the Rue Bonaparte, where the painters, engravers, sculptors, and architects congregate. Every nation was represented there. Every nation, more or less, had been sending its youth to Paris for instruction and inspiration ever since the Middle Ages; and the Latin Quarter had received them all, instructed them all, inspired them all, nor ever thought to ask them whence they came or how much money they had. There Alexandre and his budding compatriots received them as brothers, and taught them the ancient Latin Quarter religion of making fun of hardship—so long as it was one's own.

You should have seen the Alexandres march away when the order for mobilization came!

Some of them let themselves go to the extent of kissing some old professor or other whom they had particularly hazed of late. That was merely to show him how their hearts really felt toward him. Some of the professors wept. That was merely because of the certainty that a

had not been brought up on the traditions of 1870. There were no delusions this time. It was war—starvation, disfigurement, broken careers, death.

And so, in the presence of such things, what could a poor type of the Latin Quarter do but laugh and sing? Other-



good many of these lovable pests were going away forever.

But, for the most part, it was the old Latin Quarter merriment all over again—new puns, fresh jokes, still wittier words to the Latin Quarter songs. And the merriment had the same old origin and purpose. They knew what they were up against. There wasn't one of them who

wise, he might afflict his friends; or he himself might turn bitter; or his heart might break.

#### THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE

There were a good many American students in the École des Beaux Arts that August. There always have been. The American art student, to whatever art he



aspires, fits into the life of Paris as naturally as if Paris were a city of his own, his native land. These Americans got together. What they said was virtually this:

"These young Frenchmen have been treating us like brothers ever since any of us can remember. The École des

very long, in all sorts of roundabout ways, that a good many of the students, apparently so light-hearted and irresponsible, had been supporting a relative, or two, or three—some old mother, or a couple of sisters, or even a wife with a number of babies to her credit. Generally speaking, these dependents were



"A NOTE FROM THE FIRING-LINE"—A CARD DRAWN AND TINTED BY MAURICE CROUZET

Beaux Arts has opened her doors to us. Her professors have been giving us everything they had. Can't we do anything at all in return?"

The answer was soon formulated. And that was how there came to be organized the American Students Committee of the École des Beaux Arts.

That was two years ago, and the purpose of the committee then was merely to assist past and present members of the famous school who were serving at the front. That is still one of its principal objects, but its work has broadened greatly since then.

For example, it was discovered before

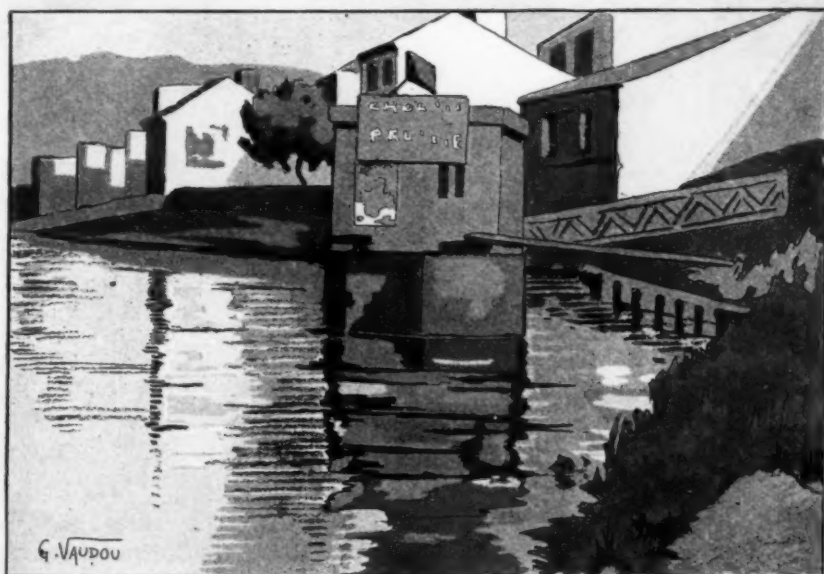
not of the charity-accepting class, any more than the students themselves had been.

What was to be done? This, for one thing:

Right there in the all-but-abandoned school a workroom was established. The marbles and the plaster gods looked down. The ladies knitted and sewed. Thus they were not only furnished the means of helping their boys at the front, and talking about them to those who understood—how gifted Alexandre was, and how ambitious, and how good withal; but of earning, at the same time, enough to live on while the genius of the family



"IN THE BLUE ALSATIAN MOUNTAINS"—AN EFFECTIVE CHRISTMAS-CARD LANDSCAPE



"A RIVER OF FRANCE"—A LANDSCAPE NOTE FOR A CHRISTMAS CARD

was busy carrying a rifle and digging trenches and shedding his blood.

#### HELP IN AMERICAN DOLLARS

There were half a dozen American students who volunteered to remain in

It wasn't so very long before the students who had returned to America were sending to their colleagues in Paris something around a thousand dollars a month. And they've kept it up ever since—no one but the treasurer and his asso-



A TRIBUTE TO THE GALLANT SCOTTISH ALLIES OF FRANCE

Paris to look after that end of the business. Many were already engaged in helping France elsewhere. Others went to America to raise the funds required. It was up-hill work; that is, it would have been up-hill work for most people; but these students had learned something more at the Beaux Arts than mere painting or draftsmanship or architecture.

Was a Beaux Arts man ever baffled by such a thing as a mere lack of funds?

ciates will ever know at what outpouring of sheer devotion and gratitude.

To-day, certain other sums are still coming in from former students of the Beaux Arts. These students have been discovered everywhere, or bobbed up on their own, asking to help. Their responses have come in from every corner of the globe, almost—Hawaii, Alaska, the Philippines, Manitoba, Peru.

Once a Beaux Arts man, always a



"SOUP-POT AND BREAD-BASKET"—A SKETCH FOR A BATTLE-FRONT CHRISTMAS CARD BY MAURICE CROUZET

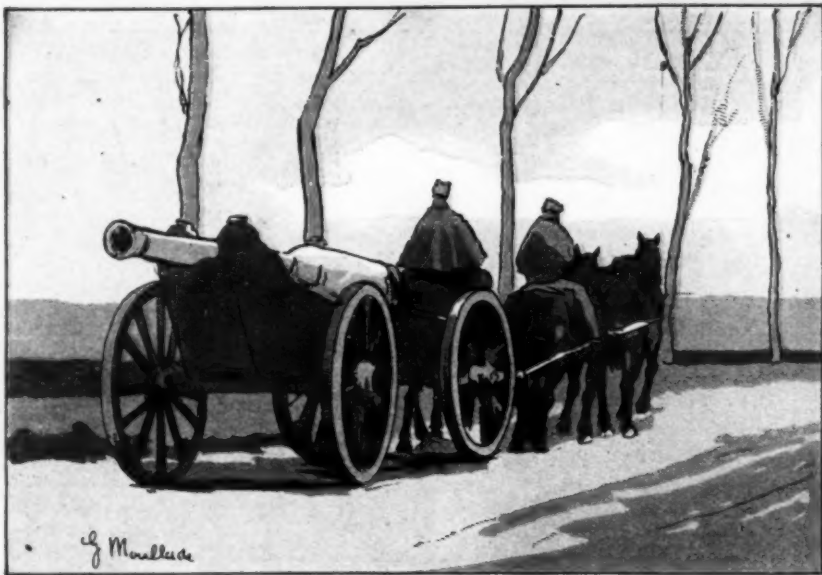


"A LISTENING-POST"—A CARD BY TESSON, SHOWING A FRENCH OFFICER LISTENING FOR SIGNS OF ENEMY MINING OPERATIONS





"A GATEWAY AT KUT-EL-AMARA"—A SOLDIER-ARTIST'S SOUVENIR OF THE EAST



"BRINGING UP A HEAVY GUN"—A CHRISTMAS CARD DRAWN BY G. MOULLADE

Beaux Arts man, so they say. The famous school on the left bank of the Seine has a way of blowing itself into the human crystal—like Oxford, like Cambridge, or Harvard, or Yale.

But even with this return, there could

parte and the Quai Malaquais were suddenly gasping their lives out up there for lack of them. Some of them came back to Paris not quite dead, but in a condition to stir all the relief committees in France to action.



"HER GRANDSONS ARE FIGHTING FOR FRANCE"—A CHRISTMAS-CARD STUDY BY BEAUME

never be enough. The opportunity for doing good on the other side simply knew no limits, except those set by financial inability.

For example, there came a sudden call for respirators, to protect the wearers against poisonous gases, when such things were scarcely known outside of a few mines and engine-houses. A good many of the companions from the Rue Bona-

The American Students Committee promptly discovered this unsuspected chance, and took it. The fighting brushmen themselves sent back the plans and specifications on which the first respirators were built.

It was always like that; for the work of the committee soon took on an extension not quite like anything else developed by the war. The emigrants from the



"RATIONS FOR THE FIRING-LINE"—A BATTLE-FRONT NOTE BY RENÉ JAUDON

*école* to the battle-front, for example, were beset from the first by a peculiar homesickness. Fellows who had been bound together by all those ties of sympathy and aspiration so common to student life everywhere were now widely separated.

What had become of this or that brother of the pencil or the burin? Where was François? Where was Jean?

It wasn't very long before such inquiries began to swamp the committee, not only from the families of the boys, but from the boys themselves, and the committee set immediately to work to satisfy the demand.

#### THE BEAUX ARTS GAZETTES

This was the beginning of those gazettes which have since become such a godsend to the surviving *copains* of the school. Now there is one gazette for each student group. The *Ecole des Beaux Arts* was made up of such groups

—the *ateliers* of this or that famous professor. The news, the gossip, or the official reports concerning a student were published in the particular gazette devoted to the *atelier*—they call it "*atier*" in the student slang—to which that student belonged before the war broke out. In turn, this gazette was sent to all the other members of the group, wherever they were, from the Yser to the Vosges, and likewise to the students' families.

Auguste Edouard, eating his heart out in a prison-camp, is suddenly brought into communication again with Philippe and Michel. *Tiens!* Philippe has risen to be a captain. Michel, *pauvre diable*, has lost both hands. But how like Michel to refer to his lost members as "paws," and to crack that joke about joining the impressionists!

There was no lack of copy for these little newspapers, once they were fairly launched.

Most of the articles, it is true, showed signs of haste. Every now and then one was received—forwarded by some benevolent Red Cross worker—which lacked the finishing touch. But were there ever newspapers so rich in human interest?

Even the "P. R."—"pas répondu," "no answer"—which followed certain names could hold certain of the readers spellbound. For there were not many of the boys who marched singing from the Rue Bonaparte in August, 1914, who were still untouched. Some were dead. Some were missing. Some were otherwise beyond call or recognition in the hospitals. Some were in prison-camps so remote that not even the good offices of the American ministers and ambassadors could readily find them.

The gazettes were a curious mixture of grave and gay. Some one wrote:

Excuse my silence, but I've been serving as a practise-target for everything from grenades to howitzers ever since coming to the front. If I wanted to eat a little soup—bang! If I tried to smoke my pipe—bang! A week ago I was admiring a drift of morning fog across a purple field when, once more—bang! And there I was in an ambulance!

"Honestly," wrote another contributor, "sometimes I think that I'll never like mud again!"

#### A FAMOUS SCULPTOR'S GREETING

Or, take this little address of M. Antonin Mercié, published in the gazette of his particular group:

*Poilus*, my dear friends, yesterday my pupils!

An abyss has opened between your generation and mine.

You are of the men able to fight, to defend their country.

I am of those who can no longer do so.

To-day it is you who teach, I who learn.

However hard may be these hours through which you pass, how I envy them!

There will be laurels enough for all of you, and for you we keep them green.

I kiss you all.

*Vive la France!*

A. MERCIÉ.

In brief, these gazettes brought to the lonely and homesick student at the front

the very breath of the École des Beaux Arts. They let him smell again, in imagination, the modeling-clay and chalk-dust; hear once more, in imagination, the voices which, most likely, he would never hear again in any other way.

Like everything else connected with the committee's work, the gazettes also rapidly expanded.

One of these days they will probably furnish a beautiful paragraph, or perhaps a page, to the historian who writes an account of the war. They will bear an eloquent and touching testimony not only to the moral health of these Latin Quarter dreamers who went forth to fight—their courage, their eternal resiliency, their mordant humor in the face of nameless horrors and hardships. The gazettes will show, as well, that these warriors never forgot that they were artists also.

#### ART FROM THE BATTLE-FRONT

Most of the gazettes leaped at once to the dignity of a frontispiece—like the *Gazette Laloux*, like the *Redon*, which calls itself "the organ the most formidably *poilu* of all the most *poilu* organs." And there wasn't one of them which did not come forward with some pictured allegory to frame the honor-roll of their dead.

But, apart from these, the sketches began to come in. Much easier it is for most artists to draw than to write. In any case, what a temptation, what an indulgence, what a recreation, to put down an impression or two, even in a trench, with the bullets zipping overhead, even in a dugout, with blasting tons of destruction falling all about!

"I just finished this sketch," one student wrote, "when a *marmite* rolled me over with my four hoofs up. Say, talk about volplaning with your engine cut off!"

The battle-front became a mine of sketches. The gazettes were now illustrated. They were more useful than ever in keeping up the spirits of the former companions of the Beaux Arts. They



were more than ever a consolation and a joy to the mothers, the sisters, the wives. But, almost by the same token, the task of the American Students Committee was becoming more severe.

It was that old financial bugaboo again. Where was the money to come from? Two winters had come and gone.

Even so, this continued to be only half of the problem. For, with all the money in the world, still the committee simply could not force their French friends to accept anything that looked like charity.

Charity was all very well, and very beautiful, too, for the helpless; but they were not helpless. Not by a good deal! Name of a pipe! There were enough helpless ones in the world without counting them in!

Still, there was that lack of money. Couldn't they pitch in and earn it themselves?

The American Students Committee thought it over.

#### COINING ART INTO CASH

There were mighty few people in Europe buying pictures just then, true enough; but wasn't there some way to turn to account these sketches—in oils, in pen-and-ink, in water-colors—which kept coming back from the front? And, every now and then, some former *copain* showed up, on furlough, or wounded, or sick, who, in a perfect frenzy of stifled creation, seized brush or crayon and turned out a little masterpiece.

This was the genesis of one more development in the committee's activities—a development which may turn out to be the most interesting of all.

The making of Christmas cards, so-called, and menus, by the soldier-artists at the front, in their intervals of fighting, of back-breaking toil, or of convalescence, has come to be recognized as a regular source of revenue. It must have taken some little tact at first to get them started. For, in the absence of any demand at all for such luxuries as modern pictures, it was decided that the cards

would have to be retailed at a uniform price of fifty cents.

In normal times these men—and many women—would never produce such cards for many times that price. For most of the artists were not mere students at all, but the alumni of the famous school—painters of mature technique, of an accepted excellence, of wide reputation, the old masters of to-morrow—such as might survive.

Mr. Whitney Warren, of New York, paved the way by inducing such famous men as Cormon, Bonnat, Ridgway Knight, Helleu, Walter Gay, Dagnan-Bouveret, Thériat, and others—both French and American, all *anciens* of the Beaux Arts—to lead the way, and their example was contagious. It was they who contributed the first cards, and these were literally snapped up at prices ranging from ten to two hundred dollars.

Yet these masters themselves would be the first to say that their own cards were in no way more delectable than the cards now being produced—each one an original, signed by the artist, passed upon by a committee before acceptance. It has become another Salon!

"Smile at victory!" wrote Alexandre. "She's a beautiful child."

And he sent in a rather unsteady little sketch of the Red Cross nurse who was taking care of him. Somehow or other, the picture wasn't quite good enough to sell. It was too precious for that, anyway. So they published it in the gazette of Alexandre's *atelier* instead.

#### LITTLE BITS OF FRANCE

But, as a rule, there is a peculiar absence of the military note in most of these cards which the soldier-artists make. It is almost as if, in the midst of their inferno of blood and steel, of smoke and torture, they were clinging more than ever to the old ideals of perfect peace and pure beauty. A corner of Versailles, a church steeple scarred by nothing but time, a rustic interior, a pond by moonlight, an Angelus—one can guess,

but never can know, what the artist was thinking about when he painted it—France as she was, or France as she will be, but almost always France.

The American Relief Clearing House, which is quartered at No. 5, Rue François Premier, Paris, not far from the Grand Palais des Beaux Arts, has taken the business of the cards in hand. The Students Committee, grown to the dignity of such an organization as the students themselves never dreamed of when they made that first fine gesture of aid, now sits with the other American committees at the Clearing House every week. Its American headquarters are at 107 East Thirty-Seventh Street, New York, which is the home of the treasurer, Mr. Henry R. Sedgwick.

There are not so many students at the front now as there were in the beginning—not from the École des Beaux Arts, in any case. They were of the stuff that first lines are always made of—the sort that nothing stops, short of death or dismemberment. But there has been no decrease in the amount of work to be done. The families of the missing boys are still there, still refusing to accept the unearned sou, even when they don't know where the next sou is coming from. And meanwhile the work performed by so many hands before has fewer hands to perform it now.

There are two big rooms devoted to the work of the American Students Committee. The third winter draws near. In these rooms, while the Greek gods look on unmoved, the mothers, sisters, wives,

knit and sew, sew and knit. If a good many of them are wearing black, even their color-sense seems to be satisfied by the perpetual presence of those two flags intertwined up there, both of them bright red, white, and blue.

#### ALEXANDRE'S LAST LETTER

There are hills and hills in France covered by new cemeteries, and every one of the thousands of graves is marked by a wooden cross and a little flag. From a distance, only the red of these flags can be seen, so that the cemeteries look like nothing so much as field after field gay with scarlet poppies.

One would swear that the cemeteries themselves had caught something of the Latin Quarter spirit, flaunting tragedy with an unconquerable gaiety.

The last communication of all came in from Alexandre the other day. It appears that he had been hiding from his friends something of the truth.

The communication was a letter to one of the editors—a friend of his; but Alexandre had merely dictated it. He was beyond writing, or even drawing, any more. Those wounds of which he had jested were to be the last of him.

"I used to dream about getting the cross of the Legion of Honor," he wrote. "Rememberest thou? But now it's going to be the wooden cross, instead!"

It was Alexandre's last joke. He must have reflected; for finally his philosophy came out.

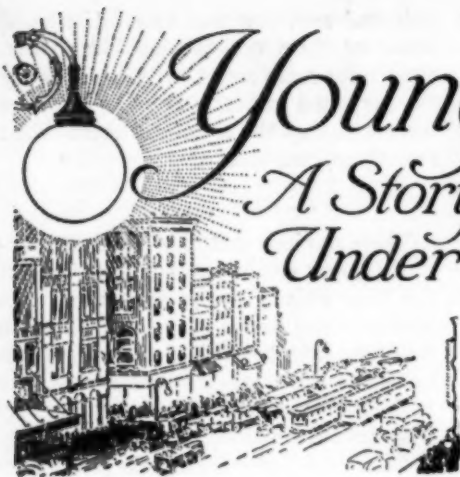
"No matter," he added in conclusion. "In either case, it was—for France!"

#### A SONG OF AUTUMN

I WATCHED the swallows gather at the first faint stir of autumn,  
As her garments trailed the woodland ways and turned the bracken gold;  
And I grieved to think the rose must die and summer leave her kingdom,  
For the nightingale had left us with his secret yet untold.

I followed through the orchard where the swallows dipped and hovered,  
And I called to them to linger, but they left me, every one;  
And at eve the pale moon peeping found me weeping, all forsaken,  
For my dreams went with the swallows in the pathway of the sun!

*Winifred Sutcliffe Duncan*



# Young Blood<sup>\*</sup>

## *A Story of Life Under the White Lights*

by Fred Jackson

*Author of  
"A Full House," etc.*

### CHAPTER I

#### BUCKY GOES TO TOWN

YOUNG Jimmy Barrister, who owned a trumpet, and who seized every opportunity of making the campus aware of the fact, leaned out of his window and blew a warning blast to inform the others that he was ready. From across the square Reddy Wheeler answered with a toot on his flute; whereupon windows flew up on all sides, heads popped out, and all sorts of shouts and cries and yells resounded, in honor of the departure of Bucky Rollins and the six brave classmates who were to form his guard of honor into town.

Bucky himself wore black, as befitted the chief mourner and only remaining relative of the late Chauncey Raymond Rollins. His suit was black, his soft felt hat was black, his cravat was black, and there were black-silk stripes in his shirt. Alonzo, who had accompanied him when these things were purchased, had advised the addition of a black-bordered kerchief; but Bucky had resisted that.

"After all," he had announced with decision, "I hardly knew the old duffer. Hadn't seen him since I was four years old, and all I remember of him from then

is a lot of whiskers; so there's no need of going the limit. Solemn and dignified, but not depressing—that's the note I want to sound!"

But far from solemn or dignified he looked as he kicked his suit-case down the stairs and then followed after it to join the others, who were already piling into the village hack below. Even his funereal trappings, so dutifully worn, couldn't quite overshadow the joy-of-life look about Bucky, or drive the devil-may-care light from his blue eyes.

Happy-go-lucky, irresponsible, gay, he had not yet learned to be serious, or to realize that life isn't all a merry jest. He was only twenty-two, and fate had been good to him. Not even this vague reminder that death is always near could down the spirits of Bucky and his chums.

A shout went up as he made his appearance. He waved his hat in grateful response, grinning the while as his glance flashed from one eager face to the next.

Reddy Wheeler, in a tie as red as his hair, if not redder, moved over to make room for Bucky, and shouted to Dicky Mason to do the same. Whereupon a small space was obtained and Bucky crowded into it, flinging his long-suffering suit-case up in front, to top the pile towering at Alonzo's feet.

Alonzo sat beside old Hicky Lownes, the driver. The other two seats designed to hold four with scant comfort, accommodated the other six adventurers, Jimmy Barrister, Gordon Prime, and Simeon Atherton—known as Simeon the Monk—occupying the seat that faced backward.

The port-side horse looked back with a weary and resigned expression to see if any one intended to ride upon the fringed roof, and, being reassured, passed the signal to his running mate. Old Hicky Lownes cracked his whip with a flourish, to indicate that for his part the start might be made at any moment. The mob—the *canaille*, the common herd who hadn't the honor and good fortune to be Bucky's intimate pals—raised a parting cheer of good-will as the mourning party set forth.

No one thought of old Chauncey Raymond Rollins, who was really responsible for the holiday. But then, of course, to six of them, he was merely a name and a corpse. They had never heard of him until the wire came. They didn't know that he was living until they heard that he was dead. And to Bucky, as he said himself, his great-uncle Chauncey was merely a lot of whiskers. That was absolutely all that he could recall of his one and only glimpse of the old gentleman.

He felt sorry, to be sure, that his great-uncle was dead. He felt sorry that any one was dead; it was such fun being alive.

On the other hand, he felt glad that he was named in the old man's will. He felt his gratification at that was greater than his sorrow at Uncle Chauncey's death. For, after all, one can't break one's heart over the passing of a lot of whiskers—especially when one is twenty-two and named in the will!

So the drive to the station was a merry one. The mourning party waved and shouted to friends, took off its hats to girls and the mothers of girls, descended for ice-cream soda at Regan's, and then

bribed Hicky Lownes generously to set his fiery steeds galloping in order to make up for lost time.

The train was in, precisely on time, to every one's surprise, and to Bucky's annoyance, for he had to buy tickets and parlor-chairs for the crowd, it being *his* part and *he* being now an heir. However, Reddy Wheeler and Dicky Mason sat on the train-steps with their feet on the ground, while Alonzo addressed the conductor in Spanish, with such fluent eloquence and such striking gesticulations that in spite of his ignorance of the language, the poor man found himself so much interested that he forgot to give the signal to move until the seven young men were aboard.

So they made their getaway without mishap, and in seven parlor-chairs, with their suit-cases at their feet, turned their eager, beaming faces toward New York.

## CHAPTER II

### THE WILL

EVEN under ordinary circumstances, a moving train is a poor sort of place for college boys. It gives them no room to stretch, no room to lounge, no room of *any* sort! To our seven young gentlemen from Elmhaven, however, this enforced constraint at this particular time was well-nigh unbearable; for they felt—nay, they knew—that they were embarked upon the most exciting adventure of their lives.

Three years of scholastic life stretched behind them, pleasantly punctuated here and there with larks and sprees and jollifications it is true, but infinitely monotonous on the whole. The novelty of college life had passed. Already they were beginning to crane their necks for a glimpse of the bigger world beyond.

And now an intimate peep beyond the school horizon was to be vouchsafed them. Bucky had been summoned to hear the reading of his great-uncle's will, and he had brought them all along for



a celebration that should be in keeping with the size of his inheritance, and that should fittingly blaze the college name through the length and breadth of the metropolis. For his own honor as well as for the honor of Elmhaven University, Bucky meant to do the thing up properly.

Small wonder, then, that they were far too restless to remain long in their seats in the parlor-car. Before they had traveled five miles out of Elmhaven, Reddy Wheeler bethought himself of his pipe and produced it, thereby giving the signal for a universal pipe-hunt. Tobacco-bags were borrowed and lent, and matches were discovered, after dint of much searching here and there. The whole party descended *en masse* upon the club smoker, to the dismay of some traveling men talking business at one end of the car, and the disgust of two Boston chess-players farther on.

The young men smoked. They jollied the porter. They sang glee-club ditties. They played a few hands of poker at the table vacated by the chess-players, and had lively arguments over them. They rough-housed Dicky Mason for casually adjusting his cravat, and thereupon became engaged in a sort of battle royal that terminated only with their migration to the dining-car.

They had lunched in Elmhaven before leaving, and had also feasted upon ice-cream sodas at Regan's, but at twenty-two the appetite is voracious, and food at any hour is both timely and welcome. So they moved from the club smoker to the diner, to the delight of the other occupants of the former, and busied themselves with hot cakes and maple sirup, coffee, and pie.

A wager as to who could devour the greatest number of hot cakes kept them amused until the train reached New York. Then they corralled seven "red-caps," and, each man followed respectfully by a porter carrying his bag, commandeered taxicabs and were driven to the offices of Gladwin & Kent.

It had been decided beforehand that

the first thing to be done was to hear the will read and learn just how large Bucky's inheritance was.

"It may be five hundred dollars or even a thousand," Bucky had admitted, after reading Mr. Gladwin's non-committal letter. "Then again, it may be his second-best Bible or his wig. There's not even a hint in this communication."

"That being the case," Reddy Wheeler had decided judicially, "the best thing to do is to go straight to Gladwin's office for particulars. Then we'll know exactly how we stand, and how much we can afford to spend."

This suggestion was unanimously adopted. To Gladwin & Kent's they drove straight from the station. In the outer offices, upon the huge, leather-covered davenport generously supplied for the purpose, six young gentlemen disposed themselves, while Bucky sent in his name and presently followed it to the *sanctum sanctorum* of Benjamin Gladwin, senior member of the firm of Gladwin & Kent, and the late Chauncey Raymond Rollins's closest friend and adviser.

Bucky recalled Benjamin Gladwin as the stout and prosperous father of a freckled little girl with whom he had played during one wretched summer spent at a fashionable resort. That had been in his ninth year—thirteen years before; but to his astonishment, he found the gentleman looking strangely unaltered.

In a big, cheerful room sat Benjamin Gladwin, entrenched behind a solid mahogany desk. He did not rise to receive his visitor, but shot forth a stout and pudgy hand, which Bucky gripped cordially—*too* cordially, to judge from Gladwin's expression—and regarded old Chauncey Raymond Rollins's one mourner with keen gray eyes.

"Well, well!" said he, by way of greeting. "You are Willie Rollins, eh?"

Bucky grinned an acknowledgment, despite his loathing for the despised diminutive of his helpless youth.



"I am," he admitted, "though I haven't been called that in years. I was christened William Raymond Rollins."

"Your mother used to call you Willie," said Gladwin meditatively, puffing on his cigar. "And so did Nancy. I suppose you have forgotten Nancy?"

He looked up sharply at that, to find Bucky emphatically shaking a negative.

"Indeed not, sir! I remember her perfectly—pigtails, freckles, and all," said he.

Gladwin chuckled.

"Not much of either left," he sighed. "You must come up to see her. She'll be glad to renew the old acquaintance, and so will her mother and myself. We were very fond of your mother, William."

"Yes, sir, I remember," said Bucky, rather wistfully.

He never spoke of his mother or thought of her without feeling a mist in his eyes—a most unmanly mist, he considered it. She had been so very young and—to him, at least—so very sweet and beautiful! It had never seemed quite fair to him that she had had to leave him.

"Sit down," said Gladwin, rather abruptly—but that was only his way.

Bucky sat down on the nearest chair, just separated from Gladwin by the sliding shelf of the big desk, and the desk telephone upon it. He still held his new black felt hat in his hand. The sun from the big front windows brightened his fair hair, and made his eyes look even bluer than usual.

"I suppose," went on Gladwin, punching little holes in his blotting-pad with his pen, "that you hardly remember your Uncle Chauncey?"

"No, sir, I don't, to tell the truth," answered Bucky frankly. "I remember seeing him when I was about four years old. I remember squirming like the deuce when he picked me up and kissed me. I felt too grown up to be kissed by men, you see. I remember sulking behind the table and giving him black looks around the corner of it afterward;

but I've forgotten completely how he looked."

"H'm!" commented Gladwin. "Well, he wasn't much to *look* at—that's a fact; but he was a good man. If you turn out to be as good a man as your Uncle Chauncey, William, nobody'll have anything to complain of."

Bucky said nothing. He thought of promising to be a good man, but that seemed too ridiculous to risk; so he contented himself with smiling amiably and waiting. He had a winning smile—his mother's smile.

"For a man to be good in this bad world," Gladwin went on gravely, "is something of a distinction, William. Most men aren't good, I'm afraid!"

"No, sir," Bucky assented, though he hadn't thought much about it.

"But for a man to be good and wealthy, too—well, that's something of a record, I think myself; and that's what your Uncle Chauncey was."

Bucky pricked up his ears. "Wealthy" sounded promising to him, in his official capacity of heir.

"My uncle left a—a large estate, then?" he asked, with some effort to appear casual and nonchalant.

"He left a *very* large estate," answered Gladwin.

Bucky took leave of the second-best Bible idea—likewise of the set of horse-hair furniture and the locket with hair inside. He drew a long breath, hopefully.

"The fact is, William," proceeded Gladwin, "as your great-uncle's only relative and heir, you are now a rich man."

Bucky's heart began to race. His color deepened. His eyes lighted. He smiled eagerly.

"Just how rich, may I ask, sir?" he ventured timidly.

"About five millions, the principal amounts to," answered Gladwin. "Your income will be about two hundred thousand dollars a year."

"Five millions? Two hundred thou-

*sand dollars a year?*" repeated Bucky, wetting his lips.

His head swam. Tears of excitement filled his blue eyes. He threw himself back in his chair and laughed, a little hysterically.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE GOLDEN STREAM

MR. GLADWIN looked toward the window in silence, until Bucky partially recovered his self-control. His gray eyes were warm with sympathy and understanding.

"It seems like great good fortune to you, William," he said at last, rather slowly; "but I am not so sure that it will turn out so in the end. I wish you were a little older—a little more experienced in the ways of the world, before coming into active control. But you are of age; and it can't be helped. I can only advise you, if you'll let me, and perhaps take some of the weight of responsibility off your shoulders. Your uncle wrote and asked me to do that."

Bucky nodded gratefully.

"Thank you, sir," he said.

"You'll go back and finish at college, of course?" asked Gladwin. "You'll not let this interfere?"

"I don't know. I dare say I shall go back—with my friends," answered Bucky. "I shall want time to think it over." He looked up at Gladwin wistfully. "I've been one of the poorest boys at Elmhaven. Did you know that, sir?"

"No, I didn't," admitted Gladwin.

"I mean among the fellows who—whose fathers settle everything and see them through. My—my mother left me just about enough to get me out decently. She used to say that after I'd finished I'd be equipped to make my own way. She made me promise I'd use the money to get a college education; and I've used it as she wished, but it's been a pretty tight squeeze. There hasn't been any money to throw about carelessly or waste.

But *now*—well, the grind's all over, do you see? With two hundred thousand a year—why, I can finish in a blaze of glory. And afterward—"

He stopped and gazed off into space with shining eyes.

"Everything worth while that life has in store," put in Gladwin quietly.

"Everything!" repeated Bucky. "Everything!"

He leaped to his feet and stood smiling down at Gladwin.

"The—the details can be worked out later, can't they, sir?" he asked. "I mean the formalities—whatever there is to do. I've got some friends outside, you see—some boys from college; and they'll be anxious to hear. We're going to be in town for several days at the—at the Mammoth."

He chose, on the spur of the moment, the largest and most expensive hotel in town.

"I see," said Gladwin, smiling. "Of course! You'll stop in to-morrow or next day, at your leisure?"

"Yes, sure! And meanwhile would it be possible—convenient for me to—draw on you—for a little advance?" asked Bucky, coloring with embarrassment.

"It would," answered Gladwin pleasantly. "Glad to be of service, I'm sure. How much will you have?"

Bucky grinned.

"How much *can* I have?" he asked frankly. "I'll take as much as you'll give me. We—we shall be wanting to celebrate, you know."

"Five hundred dollars? A thousand? Five thousand?" asked Gladwin, reaching for his check-book.

"Fi-ive thousand—if it won't inconvenience you, sir," said Bucky recklessly, swallowing hard.

"Not at all," answered Gladwin, making out the check.

Bucky's head buzzed.

"I'll O. K. your signature, so that you can get the money down-stairs as you go out," added Gladwin. "How's that?"

"Awfully good of you, sir," said Bucky. "Thank you very much!"

He took the check and looked at it incredulously. It represented as much money as he was accustomed to spend in two years.

"You'll stop in to-morrow or next day, then?" summed up Gladwin. "And I can find you at the Mammoth, if I should want you?"

"Yes, sir," answered Bucky vaguely, offering his hand. "I—I'm a thousand times obliged to you," he added, much moved.

"Don't think of it," urged Gladwin.

They shook hands, Bucky giving this new-found friend a firmer grip than before. Then, with his hat on the back of his head and his check clutched firmly in his hand, he started for the door. But at the threshold he had an afterthought, and turned.

"Oh, please remember me to—to Nancy," he cried politely.

"Depend upon me for that," said Gladwin heartily.

So Bucky passed out, and instantly forgot the whole of the tribe of Gladwin as his eyes fell upon the weary and impatient body-guard waiting without.

"Well?" asked Dicky Mason nervously.

"Spring it!" begged Reddy Wheeler.

"Tell us the worst at once," urged Jimmy Barrister. "Do we catch the next train back, or do we bust?"

Surrounding Bucky inquisitively, they swarmed out of the gorgeous offices of Gladwin & Kent into the white-marble corridor beyond.

"We bust!" answered Bucky. "Oh, Lord, how we bust!"

He opened his palm, revealing the pale-green check within. There was a general grab for it, but he held on to it firmly, merely showing the figures by spreading it wide.

"Five thousand!" cried Gordon Prime. "We'll never go back!"

"We'll never go back! We'll never go back! We'll never go back any more!"

echoed Simeon the Monk and Alonzo in singsong chorus.

"You're rich! Vulgarly rich! You're a bloated aristocrat!" said Reddy Wheeler, almost enviously.

"Rich?" repeated Bucky, smiling at them from a great distance. "This isn't a drop in the bucket! *Rich?* I'm a millionaire. This"—he gazed down at the check for five thousand dollars and shrugged his disdain—"this is cigarette-money!"

They stood staring, with eyes wide open and jaws dropped.

"A millionaire?" gasped Reddy Wheeler.

"Two hundred thousand a year!" answered Bucky. "Four thousand dollars a week, in round numbers! Let me see!" He squinted fiercely, in the throes of mental calculation. "That's about five hundred and seventy dollars a day—every day of my life—and the principal always there, untouched!"

The six stood speechless, breathless, gazing at him as at some weird and hitherto unheard of phenomenon.

"Twenty-three dollars and seventy-five cents every hour," continued Bucky, preceeding with his arithmetic. "Whether I sleep or wake, twenty-three dollars and seventy-five cents are being added to my cash on hand. It—it's a *miracle!*"

Reddy Wheeler seized him by the arm in a clutch of steel.

"Are you giving this to us straight?" he gasped hoarsely.

"Absolutely straight," said Bucky. "Unhand me, varlet! I'm a millionaire. Do you know who I am? I'm William Raymond Rollins, the five-million-dollar boy. Brush by! Brush by! Brush by!"

"God bless Uncle Chauncey!" cried Simeon the Monk piously, holding his head.

"Amen!" came the chorus promptly.

The elevator stopped for them, and they stood aside with marked deference for Bucky to precede them. Reddy Wheeler, with an exaggerated gesture of respect, removed his hat and bowed. The

other passengers looked with interest and curiosity at this strange behavior, their attention held by Reddy Wheeler, who constituted himself master of ceremonies and cried to the lift-boy:

"Slow, now, son! Slow! Plenty of time!" Then he turned to Bucky: "I hope the movement does not disturb you, sire? Lean on me, sire. Mind the step, sire."

Nor did Bucky's fascinating grin and blush mar the dramatic effect. Several pairs of eyes followed the little procession as it filed into the bank.

Bucky indorsed the check above Gladwin's O. K., and got the money without difficulty—in hundred-dollar bills, fifties, twenties, and tens. Cramming it into two pockets, he buttoned his coat over it and rejoined the others.

By this time all seven youths were laboring under the wildest excitement. Already they had overcome their first feeling of awe.

"Where now?" asked Reddy deferentially, as they passed down the stone steps into lower Broadway.

"Taxies!" called Bucky with a lordly air. "To the Mammoth! We'll leave our suit-cases in our rooms, and go out and buy some dress clothes. We can't show ourselves around town to-night in these things—not us!"

"Oh, rather not, you know! *Rather not!*" agreed Dicky Mason, giving his famous imitation of a musical-comedy actor's imitation of an English swell.

"This time," added Bucky grandly, "we are going to hit only the high spots. Do you get me?"

"We get you!" answered Gordon Prime.

"There's a taxi-stand yonder," discovered Reddy Wheeler. "Do you feel able to walk to it, Bucky, or shall I run over and bring a cab?"

"Oh, I'll walk!" agreed Bucky, with grinning condescension.

They descended upon the taxi-stand and corralled three cabs, one to precede Bucky's and one to follow it, forming a

guard of honor similar to the President's. In this order they advanced upon the Mammoth Hotel.

## CHAPTER IV

BEAUTY NELSON

SINGLE rooms, or even double rooms with baths, were not to be considered in Bucky's present frame of mind. He would have nothing but a large suite, with four bedrooms for the seven, three sitting-rooms, and a private dining-room—which last they never used. Indeed, so exalted a personage did he feel himself to be that he quite impressed the desk-clerk, who was not an easy person to impress, you may be sure.

The pages lost every trace of dignity and languor in their eagerness to serve him. Three boys carried up the bags, adjusted the blinds, and opened windows. For this they received such generous compensation that they supposed this particular group of guests to be either drunk or mad, and despaired of further gratuities; but Bucky, for the first time in his life, was enjoying the pleasure of spending money, and for each trip up in the lift, be the errand what it might, the pages found themselves well paid.

And maybe Bucky didn't keep them running!

He wanted newspapers and magazines. He wanted the newest books. He wanted cigars and cigarettes. He wanted some flowers to make the rooms smell nice. He wanted apples to munch on at odd moments. He wanted salted nuts. He wanted writing-paper. He wanted theater-tickets for the best "girl" show in town.

He wanted, in fact, everything he could think of that one could possibly get in a hotel. And when he had exhausted his imagination, and the combined imaginations of the other six, he still kept calling for bell-boys, because they wore numbers on the left-hand side of their uniforms.



He had invented a sort of guessing game in which each young gentleman chose a number, and the man whose number came up won a handful of bills.

But presently they tired of this sport, or, rather, they remembered the necessity of becoming suitably outfitted before night, and so Bucky gave the word for the advance upon the town's smartest tailors and haberdasheries.

There was no time to have things made, of course, but there was ample time to choose the proper garments at a ready-to-wear shop. They found one just off the avenue, and promptly took the place by storm. From socks to collars, they supplied themselves with an abundance of the very latest thing, not overlooking walking-sticks and silk scarfs and shirt-buttons.

While the tailors busied themselves with a few minor but vitally necessary alterations, they proceeded to finish up the job with shoes and hats. Then back they went to invade the Mammoth's barber-shop—to be hair-cutted and shaved and shampooed and massaged and manicured. And when, a little later, they had painstakingly tubbed in their own suite up-stairs, they were ready to tackle the new raiment with dauntless vigor.

It had been something of a task to dress them all smartly and properly in evening things without giving them the appearance of a male chorus in the third act; but many salesmen had toiled patiently over the business, and in the end had succeeded in making small points of difference manifest. Here and there, a collar differed in shape or height or style of wing. Shoes were of various designs, the tops of various materials. Walking-sticks were of many thicknesses and shades. Shirt-bosoms were of contrasting stuffs; and the taste of the individual was in each case apparent in his shirt-buttons and waistcoat.

As they gathered in the main sitting-room for an exchange of compliments, the effect was fetching. Seven clean, strong, healthy youths of twenty-two or there-

about, in any sort of clothes, are apt to make a pleasing showing; but seven in good-looking evening things are a sight well worth while. Small wonder, then, that Bucky smiled with satisfaction as he regarded the line-up.

"I guess we're pretty bad," said Dicky Mason. "What? If I only had a mon-ocle to finish me off!"

"We'll finish you off in about a minute!" said Gordon Prime, fastening his gloves.

"You couldn't finish any one off, with your waistcoat as tight as a woman's corsets," grinned Simeon the Monk. "Do you get his pretty waist-line, fellers?"

"Don't talk," murmured Jimmy Bar-rister. "Mine's so tight I can't breathe, and goodness knows where I'm going to put my dinner!"

"Listen to the vulgar person!" cried Dicky Mason in his alleged English voice, and forthwith was compelled to defend himself with his cane against a concerted attack of would-be swordsmen.

"Cut out the nonsense!" grumbled Reddy Wheeler. "Give us a chance to dope something out. Did we get seats for a show?"

"Seven in the stage-box for 'Little Miss Muffet,'" answered Bucky. "No front seats in the orchestra to be had. It's the biggest hit in town."

"Oh my!" cried Dicky Mason ecstatically. "I jes' love these here children's plays!"

"Children nothing!" replied Alonzo. "Pinky Lawrence was telling me about it last week. He says it's a whopper."

"Whatever that is," murmured Simeon the Monk.

"A whopper," explained Gordon Prime, "is a musical show full of pretty girls and songs, and with at least one good comedian."

"I know about 'Little Miss Muffet,'" put in Reddy Wheeler. "In fact, I know a girl in it—or I did when it first opened. I saw her picture in the paper."

"Is that how you know her?" asked Dicky Mason.



"No, you boob! I know her from another show. Shall I write her a note and see if she can dig up six more dames for a party afterward?"

"A party—with actresses?" cried Dicky Mason. "What 'll Aunt Clara say?"

"For Heaven's sake, muzzle him, some one!" begged Reddy.

"Do you think she could get hold of six more girls, without knowing us?" asked Bucky.

"Sure!" answered Reddy. "That part of it would be all right. I'd say you were all friends of mine and college men. These show-girls are strong for college men. The only thing is—will she still be in the show, and will she have a date already? She's a pretty popular gell."

"Pretty?" asked Gordon Prime.

"She suits me," answered Reddy calmly.

"But are her friends likely to be live ones? Is she a good picker?"

"If we don't like them, we can blow, can't we?" suggested Simeon the Monk.

"Well, what do you say?" asked Reddy of Bucky.

"Sure! Send the note by all means, and some flowers, too," urged Bucky. "We can't have a regular good time without girls."

"Listen to him!" gurgled Dicky Mason, punching Alonzo in the ribs. "The nasty fusser."

"Say, dry up, will you?" begged Alonzo, carefully rearranging his waistcoat.

"Nobody loves me!" complained Dicky Mason gloomily.

"You're an awful pest, Dicky," said Gordon Prime. "Why can't you be still when business is going on?"

"Bad business!" sighed Dicky.

Reddy Wheeler looked up from the note he was hastily scrawling.

"Dear Daisy," he began reading aloud.

"Oh, you D'isy!" chuckled Dicky.

"What's her other name?" asked Gordon Prime.

"Farrington—Daisy Farrington. She's

a Southern girl," answered Reddy impatiently.

"Ah was bo'n in Vahginia," caroled Dicky Mason, but subsided hastily as Alonzo caught him in a firm grip and dragged him down upon the couch, raising a pillow menacingly at the same time.

Taking advantage of the momentary silence, Reddy Wheeler read the following note:

"DEAR DAISY:

"Have just struck town for a holiday. Have six other fellows from Elmhaven with me, and we are going to take in the show to-night. Can't you meet us afterward for a party, and get six other girls? I thought it would be good sport to motor out to Parker's. How about it? Answer by bearer. Don't bring any dead ones.

"Yours in haste,

"MONTGOMERY WHEELER."

"That ought to fetch her!" cried Gordon Prime.

"Naughty Montgomery, writing notes to show-girls!" cried Dicky Mason.

"Where's Parker's?" asked Jimmy Barrister. "And what is it?"

"Parker's is a road-house out Yonkers way," explained Reddy. "Great nigger band—great things to eat and drink—no curfew."

"But where'll we get cars to motor out in?" asked Bucky.

"Hire them, if she says it's O. K.," said Reddy. "We can slip out in the intermission and attend to that. The thing to do now is to ring a messenger and get this to her."

"Then eats!" murmured Jimmy Barrister. "My stomach thinks I'm broke again."

"We may as well eat here—downstairs," suggested Reddy from the phone, "because it's near the theater, and we can hang around until eight o'clock for Daisy's answer without missing any of the show."

"Right!" agreed Bucky.

The messenger came and was instructed to hand the note into Miss Daisy Farrington's own hands, and not to return without an answer. Then, telling him just where to find them in the dining-

room, below, the seven young gentlemen from Elmhaven descended.

The restaurant was crowded, but a table was found for them, and a huge wooden extra top rolled over so that all of them could be accommodated. With some formality, but leisurely, they dined. They sampled Egyptian quail and vegetables out of season; they had salads of which they had long read and had never before tasted; they sipped champagne of the best vintage in the house.

There was nothing too good for Bucky Rollins and his friends that night. For he was young, he was strong and hearty, and he was a millionaire—and his own master. No more joyous combination can be found.

The answer from Daisy came before they had finished dinner. She had written it with a stick of lip-rouge on the back of Reddy's note:

Sure we'll come—seven strong. Can't find a pencil. See you later. Hurrah for us!—D. F.

That was all, but it was enough to spread general rejoicing through the ranks. They toasted Daisy and the unknown six. They toasted Reddy for a "great little digger," and Bucky for a corking host. Then, in a mood of unconquerable cheerfulness, they adjourned to the waiting taxies and the box at the Lyric.

The curtain was just rising as they took their seats, forcing Bucky politely next to the rail well up in front.

The first object his eyes lighted on was Beauty Nelson, in a shining gown, smiling down at him over an armful of crimson roses.

## CHAPTER V

### BUCKY IN THE NETS

OF course, Bucky did not know, then, that it was Beauty Nelson. He had never seen her before, nor any one at all like her. He had dreamed of such a girl. He had read about that sort in books;

but he had never seen one. He had never believed they really existed.

And now there she was, smiling down at him out of two enormous blue eyes, as innocently and sweetly and trustfully as if she had grown up next door. And her red lips curved over even, white teeth and dimples popped into view magically. Her hair was golden—not yellow, not dull and artificial-looking, but really golden, shading from ripe wheat to deep amber. Her lashes were long and thick. Her brows were arched and fine. And she had a tiny, straight nose, exquisite in its modeling.

But the beauty of her face was not all. She was as slender as a wood-nymph, and moved with a wood-nymph's grace.

In short, she was the latest beauty—the newest queen of Sunday supplements and dentrifice advertisements. By way of the studios, she had reached Broadway, and Broadway had acclaimed her. The town was at her feet in a single night. Where she had been ere the studios found her, nobody asked or cared.

To Bucky, fresh from college and poverty and commonplace, middle-class life, she was too wonderful to be real. He had eyes for no one else while she was on the stage—neither for the German comedian, who was really funny, nor for the eccentric dancers, who were really clever, nor for the much-advertised prima donna with the wonderful high notes. He sat in a sort of daze, watching Beauty Nelson as long as she was on view, and then settled back in his seat to wait, with what patience he could muster, until she should reappear.

Beauty soon became aware of his scrutiny, and played to him and for him. The other girls began to tease her, and to pass the word along. But Bucky was in no wise disturbed. He didn't care who noticed. He was hard hit, and he was not in the least ashamed of it.

Indeed, in the first intermission, he seized Reddy's arm in a fearful grip and dragged him off to send another note to Daisy Farrington, imploring her to in-

clude Beauty in the night's date. Reddy amiably agreed to do so, and wrote:

DEAR DAISY:

For Heaven's sake get the girl who wears silver in the opening chorus and carries red roses. She's blond. In the finale she represents the *Fairy of the South*. Bucky Rollins is simply bowled over (and he's the boy with the coin—oodles of it). Do your darnedest to make her join us, will you?

MONTGOMERY WHEELER.

This note, too, he read aloud to Bucky—omitting the part in parentheses, of course. He had an idea that Bucky wouldn't have liked that, but he knew that it would interest Daisy Farrington. So off went the note, and off went a cart-load of flowers with it, for they stopped at a florist's shop on their way to the theater and selected a corsage of orchids for each of the six unimportant young women, and a huge and gorgeous basket of them for Beauty. It gave Bucky a thrill to give the order and pay the bill, knowing that it was for *her*. Oh, he had it very, very bad, had Bucky.

The second act was more elaborate, more lively, and more interesting than the first, for Beauty Nelson wore a lovelier gown and was on the stage more. There was a court gown that was beyond anything imaginable, and she looked more like a princess in it than like a modern theatrical beauty. Indeed, she looked so regal and magnificent that she quite put the prima donna in the shade, and Bucky couldn't help wondering that they stood for that.

As the evening advanced, he grew more and more nervous and anxious over the thought of entertaining such a personage. But none of the others appeared at all abashed; not one seemed aware that she was different from all other girls. Indeed, Bucky was astounded to learn that Gordon Prime—that connoisseur of feminine charms—actually preferred the pert and piquant but rather common little brunette in the sailor suit, and that Alonzo was dying a thousand ecstatic

deaths over the surpassing loveliness of a Titian-haired siren in pale green.

He could not understand their taste, but he was glad to know that no one seemed disposed to dispute his claims to Beauty. With wildly beating heart and a mouth dry from nervousness, he went round with the others to wait at the stage door for her coming.

The stage door was not at all an attractive place. It was situated at the end of a dark and dingy alleyway, peopled with strange foreign musicians, with stage-hands in shirt-sleeves, and stray cats. The three cars that Reddy had ordered were compelled to wait outside, much to the satisfaction of innumerable loiterers.

Bucky was displeased at the thought that *she* had to come in contact with so much that was unpleasant. He dreamed of carrying her off to some secret rose-garden, where she could sit in the sun on a marble seat and let the cool breeze from the sea sweep over her. He would be there, too, of course, in the grass at her feet—and innumerable servants would be not too far off, awaiting their slightest word of command.

That was where she ought to be, thought Bucky—not here, where any one who had a few dollars could gloat over her, where *roués* could ogle her, and vulgar stage-hands in sweaters could comment on her charms! And he thrilled at the thought of the money that was now his, to do just such wonderful things with.

Musicians came forth first, talking in German, Italian, or the colloquial English of the Rialto; then a woman who had not been "on" in the last part of the act; then some of the men of the company; then some of the girls—the quick and careless ones who drew veils over their stage make-ups and wore long coats to hide a multitude of omissions underneath.

Then came more principals—the comedian, passing unrecognized without his putty nose, his red wig, and his false stomach; the pirate-chief, really quite amiable-looking now; and the stout ma-

tron from Nevada. More of the chorus-girls slipped out hastily with bent heads, hurrying past the waiting groups, and escaping at last at the mouth of the alley leading into the street. Quiet little bodies these, in plain little suits; ambitious toilers, working hard to earn money, and caring nothing for the gayer side of the theater life.

Next to appear was the prima donna, followed by her colored maid with an armful of flowers. A taxi is waiting for them, and they know it. In the taxi sits a man, so placed that he is in the shadow. He has no desire to be seen there.

Finally the show-girls begin to emerge—birds of brilliant plumage, gorgeous to look upon, scenting the night air with perfumes as they pass. Some of them recognize Bucky and his friends, and titter. One hums the Harvard anthem tauntingly under her breath. All are hurrying on to join parties or waiting escorts.

They say good night to the stout old doorman, who knows them all by name. This one in blue pays him back for a C. O. D. package, which she carries off with her. That one in black reads a letter eagerly, feverishly, and cries a little, letting the tears fall unnoticed. The letter has a foreign stamp.

Bucky and his friends have been scanning each face anxiously—have been dreading, with each disappointment, that Daisy had failed them and that there is to be no party after all. The suspense is really awful!

Now come more of the chorus-men—immaculately groomed and slender—perfumed, too—the exquisites, the dandies. They saunter with an effeminate air. A middle-aged woman is waiting for one of them in a limousine, half-way down the block. He jests about her, calling her by her first name, and the others laugh immoderately and look after him enviously. Their salaries are not sufficient for their wants. They, like some of their sisters in art, live by their wits.

And now, at last, comes Daisy Far-

rington, followed by a crowd of chattering, laughing, dazzling girls in soft and fluttering draperies.

Bucky studied each face, as Reddy and Daisy punctiliously made the introductions. The last of them was—*she*.

She wore a white gown as diaphanous as steam, and a coat of rose-colored stuff, with a huge collar, huge cuffs, and huge pockets to thrust her hands into. On her head perched jauntily a flaring, chiffronny bonnet, with a tiny spray of rosebuds on one side. She was more wonderful off the stage than on! Bucky's last uneasiness had vanished.

"Miss Sylvia Nelson—Mr. William Rollins," said Reddy, when he himself had been introduced by Daisy.

Bucky found her hand in his, and thrilled at the contact. He gazed into her blue eyes and utterly lost his head.

"I'm awfully glad you were able to come!" he said, in lieu of the usual acknowledgment; and without asking her permission, without so much as a "by your leave," he tucked her hand beneath his arm and led the way to the cars.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE GIRL AND THE GAME

MISS SYLVIA NELSON gasped, and gazed up at Bucky curiously as he piloted her up the alleyway toward the open street beyond.

"You *seem* glad—I must say that for you," she murmured a little reproachfully. "You're a regular caveman, aren't you?"

"Caveman?" he repeated, staring.

"Dragging me off this way from the others."

"Oh!" cried Bucky, grinning. "Not at all! I'm only hustling you toward the car because—well, I imagined you didn't find the surroundings back there as pleasant as possible. I thought you'd be happier out here."

He opened the door and helped her into the biggest car, punctiliously wrapping the robe about her.



As he bent to tuck her in, she gazed thoughtfully from his yellow head to the mouth of the alleyway. It was as if she looked upon it for the first time. In truth, she had never thought of finding fault with it. Almost all stage doors are up dark alleyways. One grows accustomed to the idea.

"It isn't very nice back there, is it?" she asked.

"Not very," he admitted. "Not at all the sort of place for—you!"

"Why not?" she asked innocently, opening wide eyes at him.

"Because!" he answered, taking his place beside her.

"Because—*why?*"

"Because you're too beautiful, too sweet and fine, to be in such a place."

She stared at him, unused to such plain speaking.

"I'm afraid you are trying to jolly me," she murmured.

"Indeed I'm not!" cried Bucky honestly. "I mean it. You *are* an unusual girl for such surroundings, you know."

"Am I?" she asked interestedly. "In what way?"

"I've told you."

"But most of the girls in show business are beautiful, one way or another."

"Not in your way, though!"

"Really?"

"They're different — coarser fibered. How did you ever get into the business in the first place?"

She shrugged her shoulders and looked dreamily reminiscent.

"I had to do something, and I hadn't been trained to do anything else. My father died and left nothing. I had to support my mother. She was an invalid."

"It was a beautiful story, and she told it well, having had much practise."

"Of course," she went on slowly, "there were plenty of men willing to marry me; but I didn't want to marry without loving. I couldn't make myself do it, though even my mother urged me to, and said it was the easiest way out for us."

"Of course you couldn't," agreed Bucky simply.

"So a girl I'd known at home—in Virginia—got me into the chorus, and here I am."

She looked up at him sweetly, and smiled.

"It must have been awfully hard on you," he said sympathetically.

"It was," she admitted, "at first. I got used to it, though. You can get used to anything you've got to do."

"That's true," Bucky assented.

"But here, we mustn't talk all the time about me. Tell me something about yourself," she cried, generously putting away all thoughts of her own sad lot.

"There's nothing to tell about me. I haven't begun to live yet," said Bucky, sighing that he had no tales of thrilling adventure to reveal.

"Haven't begun?" she questioned archly.

"Well, just begun, then," he corrected flatteringly.

She laughed softly, musically, deliciously. Her laugh was an artistic achievement.

"Funny boy," she said, half to herself and half to the world at large.

He was pleased, somehow, for there was a sort of affectionate warmth in her voice. He felt as if he had known her for years.

When he glanced around to see if the others had noted this, and if they were getting on as well as he was, he found that the car was moving, and that they were alone in it, save for the chauffeur. The other twelve had somehow crowded into two cars, and were leading the way.

The red tail-lights of the cars were visible ahead, and now and then wild shouts and bursts of laughter drifted back from them on the night wind. Obviously, the others were more intent upon gaiety and mirth than on getting acquainted.

"Thank goodness, we're not up there with those rowdies!" murmured Bucky gratefully.

"It is nice to be here by ourselves,"



she agreed, nestling back more comfortably and resting just the least little bit against him.

"Tired?" asked Bucky.

"A little. I have so many changes, you know, in this show, and a flight of steep stairs to climb for each one."

"Are there no dressing-rooms on the stage-level?" he asked.

"Yes, of course—beautiful ones; but they're for the stars."

"I should think the people who have the most quick changes would have the nearest dressing-rooms," he said.

"That's the way it ought to be," she sighed, "but things aren't as they ought to be—in the show business."

"I wish you didn't have to be in it," he told her wistfully.

"So do I. I wish I had money enough to get out of it, and to live as I please. But what's the use of wishing? The best I can hope for is that some day I may get a little part, and then—you never can tell what I might come to, in time!"

"Ambitious?" he asked.

"Awfully! I want to *do* things. I want to be more than the average individual. I want to be more than just a *beauty*!"

Her blue eyes began to shine.

"But surely you'll marry and settle down?" he suggested.

She shook her head.

"No, I don't believe so."

"Why not?"

"Because I'd have to love a man a lot before I'd marry him—and there's nobody I care enough about."

"But there may be somebody some time—there's sure to be somebody some time!"

"If there is," she added sadly, "I'm afraid he wouldn't want to marry me—not now—not after the people I've lived among, and the sort of life I've been in. Nice men don't marry chorus-girls any more. They used to, but they don't any more."

"Don't call yourself a chorus-girl, please!" begged Bucky.

"But I am one," she pointed out.

"You're nothing like the rest of them."

"But I am one. Your mother would call me one, wouldn't she?"

He drew a long breath.

"My mother's dead," he managed to say quite calmly.

"Oh! Well, your sister, then—or your father, or your uncles and aunts?"

"I haven't any relations," said Bucky.

"My last uncle died a week or so ago—and he was only a great-uncle."

"Your friends, then?"

"Who cares what they say?"

"It would make a difference," she insisted. "The world would call me a chorus-girl, you can be sure. Why, my friends in Virginia—people that have known me all my life—have simply dropped me since I've been on the stage. And if they've dropped me, knowing me, you can't expect strangers to behave differently. That's why I don't mind doing things like this."

"Like what?"

"Going out this way, with a crowd of strange men and—and girls who aren't any too discreet."

"But Reddy Wheeler knew Daisy. We were properly introduced. It was quite all right!"

"Yes, but nice girls don't do this sort of thing, you know—unchaperoned, and so late at night, and all that. You know very well they don't. You know you'd never have dreamed of asking girls to do it, if they weren't stage girls."

"Perhaps not, but that's only because stage girls are so much freer—so much more independent and sensible and unconventional. What's wrong with our party, anyway?"

"Nothing, of course—except that it wouldn't be sanctioned in Norfolk. And I wouldn't have come, except that there's nobody to care now, and—I'm young! I want a little fun, and—"

"What else?"

"I don't do this sort of thing usually, but—I saw you in the box to-night, and I *did* want to meet you!"

Bucky bent over her, radiant.

"Do you mean it?" he cried.

"Yes, but of course I shouldn't have told you."

"Why not?"

"Because you're sure to—misunderstand."

"No, I won't, honor bright!"

"I get so—so lonely for my own kind," went on Sylvia Nelson gravely.

It was an old game to her, but it never bored her; and Bucky's youth and enthusiasm, his frank sincerity, made it all the more engrossing. The devotion of men stimulated her as nothing else on earth could. She had tried nearly everything.

"I'll see that that doesn't happen again," said Bucky resolutely. "The next time you feel lonely, just call on me. I'll probably be somewhere near at hand, anyway."

"But you'll be going back to college, won't you?" she asked.

"Oh, maybe; but if I do go back, it'll only be for week-days. I'll manage to hit town every week-end."

"And you'll see me sometimes?" she asked. "You'll not forget me utterly after to-night?"

"Indeed I'll not!" he promised her emphatically.

"I wish I could be sure of that," she said half under her breath.

Then, while they were still gazing intently, questioningly, into each other's eyes, the car pulled up before the door of Parker's, and the others greeted them loudly from the steps.

They got a big table, composed of several small tables, at the edge of the dancing-floor, and were the object of much attention from other tables as they crossed the room. The girls were all well-known, especially here at Parker's, which was the place in vogue just then with the Broadway crowd. Any number of men bowed and smiled at them; any number of women waved or called out to them, or craned their necks to follow them with their eyes.

The waiters scurried about, remembering much previous tipping and hoping for future tips. They knew that Sylvia Nelson and her friends would not be wasting time with ordinary college boys. Where Sylvia Nelson was, some one represented money!

Hence the choice table, the deferential head waiter, and his scraping, bowing, bustling train.

The girls seated themselves, casting aside a good third of their costumes with their evening wraps, and lounging gracefully and effectively toward the table. Their white skin gleamed unbelievably against shining folds of satin and chiffon; their red lips smiled; their eyes glistened luminously under thick lashes and delicately arched brows; and the air was heavy with the fragrance of them.

They radiated warmth and graciousness and charm and a pleasing gaiety. They laughed and chattered and jested. To see them—to hear them—you would have thought no such things as care or worry or pain existed on earth.

They were care-free, happy-go-lucky, eternally gay. "A short life and a merry one" was the motto they had chosen for their own; and they lived up to their philosophy. The moment was the thing; to-morrow could take care of itself!

To Bucky, leaning over to whisper into Sylvia's ear, the whole atmosphere of the place was enchanting. He was free, he was rich beyond his wildest dreams, and he had at his side the most beautiful creature in the room—the most beautiful creature he had ever seen.

Reddy Wheeler, who generously took upon his own shoulders the onerous business of ascertaining everybody's wishes and summing up the orders for the waiters, selected a very commendable champagne and had it served first. If any spirit of recklessness and fun was missing, the dry, bubbling wine of France supplied it.

Tasting the sparkling draft for the first time in his life, Bucky found it less palatable than he had imagined it would

be, but the effect upon him contented him. He found that it warmed him and brightened him up. When Sylvia would have refused it—she always turned her glass upside down at first—he coaxed and urged until she was finally compelled to join him. So they clinked glasses and toasted each other, and from that moment were like old friends.

The negro band, famous for its dance-music, began a fox-trot. Bucky had trotted with the Elmhaven girls, and had been considered something of a trotter, locally; but he had never attempted to do the sort of step that Sylvia did. However, being young, he was adaptable, and speedily picked it up.

It was something like a tango, something like a one-step. It was done as much with the body as with the feet; but the details were of no importance. It was movement, rhythmic movement, accompanied by some sort of Southern musical vibration, and performed with his arms about Sylvia, and her heart beating fast against his.

Bucky had never been so happy before in his life. He applauded, at the end, until the band played a second time. At the end of the encore, taking a tip from an older and wiser man on the floor, he tossed a bill to the nearest negro. So the band broke a hard and fast rule and played a second encore, through which Bucky guided Sylvia with unabated enthusiasm.

They went back to their table, flushed and warm, to drink thirstily of their freshly filled goblets, to light cigarettes, and to toy with the oysters that Reddy had waiting—nicely chilled and tempting. They laughed and jested merrily with the others; they squeezed each other's hands under the white damask table-cloth; they whispered exciting nonsense into each other's ears.

A small boy in uniform brought toy balloons to the table, and giggled with the rest when Atherton borrowed his monkey cap and did his famous monkey stunt—the one that had earned for him

his nickname of Simeon the Monk. Then the balloons were blown up and banded about, as they were already being banded about at all the other tables. A stout lady two tables off sent hers spinning over and hit Dicky Mason on the nose, much to every one's delight; and Bucky sent his so hard against a neighbor in the other direction that it burst against the wreath of brilliants in her hair.

Stories became more and more *risqué*. Compliments became less studied, more spontaneous, less subtle. Heads drew nearer together. The band grew noisier and noisier. Alonzo kissed the Titian-haired goddess and told her that she was the most beautiful woman in the world. Every other man at the table challenged the statement.

Bucky's arm was around the edge of Sylvia's chair now; in a very little while it would be about her waist. Her eyes laughed up at him, taunted him, invited, allured. Her warm fragrance enchanted him. He was heels over head in love with her, as it is possible for only a youth of twenty-two to be.

During the long drive back to town she nestled close in his arms, and he kissed her again and again and again blissfully.

It was torture to part from her. He tossed feverishly half the night, his whole being afire with love and wine. Only the thought of the morrow gave him consolation. For she was very, very pretty, and he was very, very young.

## CHAPTER VII

### EASY COMES, EASY GOES

BUCKY awoke—to realize, with a throb of delight, that it was morning and that he was to see *her* again at noon. His heart sang within him. He sang, too, as he shaved and tubbed—sang happily on despite the protests of Simeon the Monk and Dicky Mason, in the next room. These two awoke with frightful headaches, because they had been mixing drinks at the end of the evening; but Bucky and

the rest were all in splendid good humor and fine form.

More clothes arrived for them in good time, and they arrayed themselves with great glee and had a sort of fashion parade of their own. Deep counsel was necessary to decide which ties went best with which shirts. There were endless powwows over the proper adjustment of scarf-pins, and the proper placing of colored handkerchiefs in outer pockets.

Dicky Mason brought down upon his stubborn head the scorn and sarcasm of the multitude for insisting upon wearing his white spats. Alonzo was much derided for his tortoise-shell eye-glasses on a black ribbon. Bucky was gently "spoofed" for his *boutonnière* of violets—though it was to be observed that the others promptly followed his example and ordered up more *boutonnières*.

While the florist's man was up, discussing the matter with them, of course flowers had to be ordered for the girls. Each man made his own selection, some choosing violets, some orchids, some roses. Alonzo designed a corsage of gardenias for his very white lady with Titian hair. Bucky felt that only the longest-stemmed American beauties were worthy of Sylvia. He wrote a pretty little card to go with them, inscribed:

Sweets to the sweet!

Nobody breakfasted, because they were to lunch the girls at the Ritz at twelve o'clock, but some of the boys had orange-juice sent up. Alonzo ordered coffee, and Simeon the Monk and Dicky took "bracers," of which they felt very much in need.

It was only eleven o'clock, so they decided to get some air. Descending, accordingly, they headed toward the avenue—seven young men in correct morning suits, silk hats, and light gloves, each with a *boutonnière* harmonizing with his own particular color-scheme, each swinging a stick. Pedestrians turned to gaze after them—looking for a banner, I am afraid, or anticipating a band. They

suggested a minstrel company or an advertising stunt.

Blissfully unaware of this, however, they went their way, Reddy and Bucky leading, Alonzo and Gordon Prime coming next, then Jimmy Barrister, Simeon the Monk, and Dicky Mason. They looked in at the shop-windows. They gazed at the crowds. They thought of the other fellows back in Elmhaven, and chuckled many times and oft.

The crowds, the traffic, the hurry and bustle and noise, fascinated Bucky. As he proceeded, clinging to Reddy Wheeler's arm, he felt rather like *Harun-al-Raschid* in disguise, inspecting his kingdom. Had he not heard over and over again that New York is ruled with a scepter of gold? And he had millions—five of them—to do with as he pleased!

Of course, there was nothing he wanted to do at the moment except to enjoy life and to make Sylvia happy. He vaguely supposed that he would tire of that sort of thing in time, and would want to do something really worth while—something really magnificent.

"That's the old Prask house," pointed out Reddy Wheeler, who had been born and bred in Manhattan. "He made his pile in copper, you know. And over yonder is where Anthony Gatlin lives—the man who cornered the sugar market a few years ago."

"What huge places!" gasped Bucky. "Don't you suppose they get lost trying to find their way around in houses like that? What do you suppose they use so many rooms for?"

"Oh, they use 'em," answered Reddy wisely.

"But what for? After you have some bedrooms, a dining-room, a breakfast-room, a couple of drawing-rooms, a library, a billiard-room, and a conservatory, what else is there to have?"

"A kitchen," suggested the practical Reddy.

"Of course! But what else? There must be forty or fifty rooms in that house of Gatlin's."



"Well, I suppose he has lots of guests," decided Reddy, "and maybe a ballroom, and smoking-rooms, and card-rooms, and goodness knows what. You need a lot of rooms just for the servants alone in a place like that, you know."

"That's right! He probably has a whole army of servants," agreed Bucky. "That's living, eh?"

"Rather!" echoed Reddy.

"With a house like that, and a country place to run out to for week-ends, and shooting, and Christmas, and a yacht, a fellow could have some time!"

"You're speaking," agreed Reddy.

"And I believe one could do it all, too, with an income of two hundred thousand a year."

"I know one could," said Reddy.

"To think," mused Bucky, "that I am actually in the class with Gatlin and Prask—if not the Goulds and the Vanderbilts! And yet I don't feel a bit different from yesterday—except a good deal happier."

"I should think you would," sighed Reddy. "You're a lucky cuss, you know."

"I am," nodded Bucky, throwing back his head and breathing deeply. "Because I've got not only all this money, but my health and my youth, too. Most rich people are old, or else they have things wrong with them."

"Or they have ideas about duty and obligation and all that rot," added Reddy, "and spend their time trying to reform the world, or some such foolishness. To my mind, the duty of the rich is to spend their money—to keep it in circulation any way they please."

Bucky grinned.

"If that's all I've got to do, I think I'm equal to it," he said.

"And I'm equal to helping, if you need any help," added Reddy, whacking him on the back.

With which noble sentiments they passed into the Ritz and looked about for the girls. Having found the septet, they paired off and headed for the restaurant,

the irrepressible Dicky whistling the familiar "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden," tune under his breath.

Sylvia, in a trimly tailored suit of checked material, looked unspeakably smart and *chic*. Her skirt was short, according to the dictates of fashion, revealing high tan boots of surprising smallness. She wore a black hat with aigrets on it, and some of Bucky's roses were at her belt.

It seemed to Bucky that, lovely as she had been the night before, she was tremendously more charming now. Perhaps it was due to the fact that a man always likes a woman in a tailored suit. She had a pocket cut into her skirt where men's trouser-pockets are, and she walked with her hand thrust into it with a jaunty, almost boyish air.

"Well?" said she, to start the ball a rolling. "Have you a nasty, morning-after taste?"

"I haven't."

"A headache?"

"Indeed not!"

"A sneaking feeling, then, that the champagne made you behave very—well, indiscreetly?"

"Not even that," Bucky answered, smiling frankly. "Have you?"

"Ye-es," she admitted sadly. "I'm afraid we were both rather naughty, you know."

"Naughty?" he gasped.

"Don't pretend innocence! You know very well I let you kiss me."

"And is kissing naughty?" he inquired in some surprise.

"Well, it isn't considered very nice for girls to do it with men they've just met and hardly know."

"Whatever it's considered, we know it's nice!" said Bucky. "No rule or regulation can possibly apply to all individuals. It may be wrong for some fellows to kiss some girls that they've just met and hardly know, but it wasn't for us! That was different."

"Was it?" she asked.

"Don't you know it was?"



"I don't feel quite right about it. I've never done such a thing in my life before, you know."

"I should hope not!" gasped Bucky.

"But you—you swept me right off my feet. You made me lose my head, you—you villain!"

Bucky was absolutely stunned with joy and pride.

"You little peach!" he murmured, beaming. "I can hardly help kissing you right here and now!"

"Don't you dare!" Sylvia gasped, with a great show of indignation. "The very idea! You're not to think of such a thing ever again, do you hear?"

"Not *ever*?" he repeated, staring down at her.

"Well, not for a long, long time—after we've known each other intimately for ages and ages."

"Oh!" he cried, nodding. "I see—you mean not until we're alone, later!"

The head waiter had made arrangements for them by this time, and they crossed the room to their table, again the objects of universal interest, as they had been at Parker's the night before.

Bucky and his friends were unused to being looked upon as celebrities, and it was a pleasing novelty to shine in the lime-light—even to shine with reflected glory, for, of course, it was Sylvia Nelson and the other girls from "Little Miss Muffet" who attracted attention. And the envious eyes of the other men in the room increased the interest our seven gentlemen already felt in their seven ladies. What others want, *we* want. It's human nature.

Bucky bent over Sylvia with more ardor than before as they studied the menu together.

"What do you see that you like?" she asked, looking up at him sidewise, her face very close.

"You," he answered promptly.

"I mean on the menu, silly!" she corrected him, dimpling.

"Anything that you like will do for me," said Bucky.

"A little bouillon?" she asked. "Chicken, perhaps?"

"I think I'd rather have grapefruit," he ventured. "This is my breakfast, you know."

"Oh, really? How about a nice, cold, hothouse melon, then? They're wonderful, don't you think?"

"Melon, by all means," he agreed, without committing himself, for he had never tasted a hothouse melon in his life.

Sylvia passed the order on to Reddy, whereupon everybody wanted hothouse melon. Alonzo's Titian-haired goddess wanted a cocktail first, however, and so did Daisy Farrington and Reddy and Gordon Prime. Ethelyn Newall spoke for a cup of hot water and lemon-juice, because she was campaigning against fat. Dolly Kearney insisted upon an apple. She was eating three a day to whiten her skin.

Sylvia, meanwhile, was making her selections for the real substance of the repast. She decided that a squab nicely broiled, some fresh asparagus with cream sauce, and some strawberries, with a pot of tea on the side, would serve her purpose excellently. The others fancied other things—baked trout, filet of sole, waffles, alligator-pears, and what not. All of them ate heartily save poor Ethelyn Newall, who managed to get along with two orders of artichoke.

Then cigarettes were lighted all around. The bothersome business of ordering being over, the general conversation ceased, and the party split up into pairs, continuing where they had left off the night before.

Some women look hideously vulgar and common with a cigarette; some find that it enhances their charm and displays a thousand unsuspected graces. Sylvia was of the latter sort. She smoked as if she really loved the fragrance of the weed, holding the cigarette daintily in a holder of ivory and gold. Her white eyelids drooped over it, the thick lashes guarding her eyes against the smoke. Her red lips pursed. The smoke tendrils made one

think of incense burning before some goddess of warm bisque.

Bucky had never watched a girl smoke before. The girls he had known in Elmhaven didn't do so, nor had any of the women he had known at home followed the fashions to that extent. He had always felt that it was not a thing for nice women to do; but he was forced to admit to himself now that Sylvia did it adorably.

"Do you smoke much?" he asked curiously, watching her.

"Rather a good deal. It soothes me, and I usually need soothing."

"Do you? Why?"

"Oh, there's a constant atmosphere of excitement about the show business. You're keyed up half the time—under a rotten nervous strain. You can imagine how it is, can't you? Wondering if your make-up is all right, wondering if you've forgotten anything, hurrying to be ready on time, struggling against a thousand unforeseen obstacles. The cleaner hasn't sent your gloves, or you're out of hairpins, or your taxi is held up and you're late, or the electric light burns out over your make-up place, or mice eat your grease-paint, or you get a stain on your gown, or somebody steals your precious possessions when you're on the stage, or a girl who's jealous of you tries to get in your way, so that you'll trip or get out of step or look stupid."

"It does sound pretty bad," Bucky admitted sympathetically.

"It's beastly! I don't know what the fascination is for some girls. There's so much wretched jealousy and spite, and the hours are so bad. You never get to bed early. You never get enough sleep, and you can't have any friends."

"Why not? Why can't you have friends?"

"Because when you're free they're not, and when they're free you're not. We've got to sleep until noon, you know, or we should lose our looks in no time; and losing your looks means losing your job. Then, in the afternoons, if we aren't

playing matinees or going to rehearsal, we're at the dressmaker's or shopping, or being manicured, or having our hair done, or something. That leaves us just time enough to grab a hasty bite of dinner and get to the theater in time to make up. So you see why I need something to soothe my nerves, don't you?"

"I certainly do," answered Bucky.

"I ought to be out this very minute buying a hat," went on Sylvia; "so you see how honored you really ought to feel."

"I do," he assured her frankly; "but why can't we go and buy the hat afterward? We've nothing more important to do, and I think I should like buying hats."

"Hats?" she gasped. "One is my limit, my dear boy, and I'm darned lucky to be able to afford that!"

"Well, let us buy a hat, then," he amended. "I think I should enjoy buying a hat."

"I thought men loathed going shopping," she cried wonderingly.

"Most likely they do, as a general thing; but it would be a novelty to me, you see."

"But what can we do with the others?" asked Sylvia, opening her eyes wide and nodding with her head toward the other end of the table.

"Take them along. We'll all buy hats."

She thought of Bucky's money going to outfit her friends, and did not fancy the idea.

"We should swamp the store. And they'd be bored to death. No—I'll tell you. We'll separate into couples and meet again for dinner, shall we? Then every one can do as he pleases."

She leaned forward and gazed deep into Bucky's eyes as she made the suggestion, and of course he fell. To be quite alone with Sylvia—going about in cabs, shopping—it was an opportunity not to be missed.

"Done!" he agreed happily.

Turning, he acquainted the rest with the plan. Naturally, they were as en-

thusiastic as he, the other girls never suspecting Sylvia's share in it, but seeing only the chance of cementing promising flirtations. When the young women presently withdrew to powder their noses and adjust their veils, and Bucky presented each of his friends with a hundred-dollar bill to cover incidental expenses, joy reigned unconfined.

So on the steps of the Ritz they separated, going their seven different ways—some couples in taxies, some on foot, Sylvia and Bucky closed up cozily in an old-fashioned hansom cab. Bucky had never ridden in one of these vehicles, and he wanted to; and Sylvia, as usual, was agreeable.

Who would not have been agreeable under these circumstances? She had him—and his money—entirely to herself until six o'clock; and he was manifestly in a state of wildly ecstatic infatuation.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LILIES OF THE FIELD

THE avenue was crowded. The pavement swarmed with immaculately groomed men swinging sticks, with gorgeously gowned women, with uniformed attendants opening car-doors, with policemen in blue and brass, with flower-vendors holding out trays of many-colored blossoms, with newsboys shouting the latest extras, with shop-girls and clerks making the best appearance possible on next to nothing a week, with foreigners in strangely foreign apparel, with delivery-boys carrying bundles, and messengers and footmen with lap-robcs over their arms.

In the middle of the street, now halting, now moving slowly on its way, was the great chain of cars and cabs and carriages, motor-buses, and open victorias. Policemen ruled at the crossings. At their nod, conveyances moved or halted. The great as well as the small bowed to their sway.

Bucky and Sylvia, smiling into each other's eyes, in the public obscurity of

their hansom, were very well pleased with their situation.

"It's wonderful, isn't it?" cried Bucky appreciatively.

"What?"

"Being here like this, alone together in the very midst of the crowd. It's wonderful," he went on to explain, "because of all the people on earth—the Lord knows how many millions—I'd rather be here with you than with any one else. And when you stop to think how easily we might have missed ever meeting at all!"

"It makes my very blood run cold!" said Sylvia, smiling.

"Well, you needn't be sarcastic," murmured Bucky. "You might feel a little concerned over the idea."

"I do! I feel more than a little concerned," she confessed, thinking of the hat which she really needed and hoped to get. "But, after all, we have met, you know, and we are here together, and we might as well be enjoying ourselves as thinking of unpleasant things that didn't happen."

"Right!" cried Bucky, laughing. "You're a practical little thing, aren't you?"

"I've had to be," she sighed, speaking the truth. "I've had only myself to depend on."

"Poor kid!" said Bucky, laying his hand over hers.

She turned her soft palm upward, squeezed his hand gently, and released it.

"Oh, I'm all right," she said lightly. "The worst is past. I've a fine job for all summer, they say, and I've had a nice lunch, and I'm going to squander my savings on a new hat. If that isn't enough to make any one happy, I don't know why it isn't."

"Are new hats such events in your life?" he asked, his eyes running over her approvingly.

"Rather! It is no sinecure to dress on my income."

"But hats can't cost so much," he argued.

"Can't they? Just wait until you see!"

The hansom halted before a millinery establishment, and he jumped out and helped her. As he paid off the cabby, she observed the huge roll of bills that he had left, and felt her spirits rising tremendously.

This, you see, was not her usual milliner. Her usual milliner worked downtown in one of the big shops during the day, and made a few hats for private customers at night—cheaper hats than she handled from nine to six, but accurate copies. But though Sylvia gladly availed herself of this girl's clever services, she never went to her when she shopped with a man. Only the most expensive, the most exclusive shops knew her then.

They passed into the shop and were greeted by a slender, effeminate Frenchman in a purple velvet coat. He had a waxed mustache, dyed very black, and white hair. Through his monocle he examined Sylvia keenly as he bowed low in greeting.

"How can I serve *mademoiselle*?" he asked in a rather peculiar, hoarse voice.

"I should like to see some hats, please," said Sylvia.

"For street wear? For afternoon? For evening? For wear with sport coat? For what, *mademoiselle*, if you please?"

"Oh, something rather smart—I'll leave it to you," decided Sylvia. "Let me see several."

"With pleasure, *mademoiselle*," responded the Frenchman, bowing. "Please to step this way."

He drew back a curtain and ushered them into a small, boxlike room, paneled in cream-colored wood and furnished with a small settee, a dressing-table, and a chair. There were lamps and toilet things on the dressing-table. The mirror could be drawn out to reveal three views of the face and head, and a full-length mirror behind it gave the back view.

There were curtains of black, white, and gold over the window and at the door, and the furniture was upholstered to match. Obviously, these people had

the business of trying on hats reduced to a science.

Sylvia seated herself at the dressing-table, and a colored maid in uniform appeared to help remove her hat and veil. Then, when she had readjusted her thick, blond hair to her satisfaction, the Frenchman brought in the first hat. He never showed more than one at a time.

It seemed to Bucky, sprawled on the settee and looking on interestedly, that the Frenchman was a genius in his own peculiar way, and that he had hit it the first crack out of the box, for Sylvia looked adorable in the queer creation of black and gold. But the lady herself was less easily pleased. She did not like the effect from the side.

It was a shock to the Frenchman to learn this. He was not only pained and distressed; he was horrified. He told them, in confidence, the name of the lady who had the only other hat like it in America. He called upon Bucky to witness how dashing was the effect—how smart—how *chic*. He implored Sylvia to observe how it lent her height—how it would set off the simplest costume it accompanied.

But he argued in vain. Sylvia was not to be talked into taking what she did not want. She smiled and shook her golden head.

"Have you nothing else?" she asked.

The Frenchman capitulated. Assuredly he had other models—an infinite number. He departed, carrying his rejected masterpiece with him, and returned with a study in purple.

Sylvia did not like this, either, though to Bucky it seemed even more fetching than the other. So the whole thing was gone over again.

Bucky smoked cigarettes and backed up the Frenchman, urging Sylvia to take every hat they saw. But Sylvia knew just what she wanted and what she didn't want, and she knew, as Bucky didn't, the probable cost of the hats.

However, the sixth one suited her, and she asked the price of it. It was sixty-



five dollars. Bucky looked from the Frenchman to Sylvia in wide-eyed astonishment; but neither one looked as if it was a joke.

Sixty-five dollars for a straw frame covered with roses and painted ribbon! *Sixty-five dollars!*

"Isn't that fearfully high?" asked Sylvia languidly, surveying herself in the mirrors meanwhile.

The Frenchman shrugged nonchalantly.

"If *mademoiselle* wants exclusive models, imported models, with real style, *mademoiselle* must pay," he answered. "It is not the material that fixes the price. It is the name on the label and the distinction—the *chic*."

Sylvia smiled at Bucky.

"It is nice to know that every shop-girl in town hasn't something just like your hat," she admitted. "I remember Daisy picked up a cheap hat once on Broadway, and her maid went down the very next day and got one exactly like it."

"Each of our hats is individual—different," added the Frenchman to Bucky.

"I see!" replied Bucky.

"Still," said Sylvia, with a sigh, removing the hat, "I'm afraid that's a little more than I could afford."

"Better to have one hat less, and have something good, though, *mademoiselle*," urged the Frenchman. "Economize in some other way, eh?" He turned to Bucky with a smile. "*Monsieur* will bear me out that it would be a mistake not to buy the hat. It suits *mademoiselle* so perfectly," added the designer.

"It does look well, doesn't it?" asked Sylvia, putting it on again.

"Bully!" agreed Bucky.

"Haven't you something in the same style, but cheaper?" asked Sylvia.

"No, *mademoiselle*, nothing cheaper," answered the Frenchman politely. "This is the cheapest hat we have on hand."

"You have them dearer, then?" asked Bucky curiously. "Dearer than sixty-five dollars?"

The Frenchman smiled.

"Indeed, yes—much dearer," he answered. "Would *monsieur* like to see a hat for one hundred—one hundred and fifty—two hundred dollars?"

"I certainly would," grinned Bucky. "If you've got a hat in the place for two hundred dollars, I'd certainly like to see it."

"Instantly," smiled the Frenchman, vanishing.

"It must be set with precious stones!" gasped Bucky.

"Feathers, most likely," sighed Sylvia.

She was studying the effect of the sixty-five-dollar hat again; but now, seeing that he was watching her, she removed it reluctantly and set it down.

"I suppose I was foolish to come here, but I did want a really good hat for once," she said mournfully, "and I hoped they'd have something within my means. But I could never pay so much. It would take me weeks to save it up."

"It does seem a lot," agreed Bucky.

"Oh, it's not too much for the hat. I'd pay it in a moment if I had the money; only I haven't. We'll go to a cheaper place."

She reached for her own hat resignedly, and then stood gazing at the other one, as if she could hardly bring herself to leave it.

Bucky had an inspiration.

"Do you like it so very much?" he asked gently.

"I love it!" cried Sylvia. "It has such style! And it's so becoming! I just know there'll be nothing to please me half so well, no matter where I go."

"Then let me make you a present of this," said Bucky.

She turned and stared at him wide-eyed.

"Why, Bucky!" she gasped, using his name for the first time, to his incredulous delight. He didn't even know that she knew it!

"Won't you?" he insisted, blushing. "I should like awfully to do it."

"But, you *dear* boy, I couldn't! I couldn't possibly! It would be dreadful



to let you give me a present of that sort!" she protested.

"Why would it?" he asked argumentatively.

"Because nice girls don't do such things."

"But what's wrong about it? What's the difference whether I spend the money on orchids for you, or on wine, or on a hat?"

"I don't know what the difference is," she admitted ingenuously, "but I do know that girls can't accept such things. People would talk. And—oh, nobody would understand, Bucky, that's all. I daren't class myself with girls who do such things."

"But nobody need know. It would be *our* secret," persuaded Bucky. "And so long as I didn't misunderstand—"

She sighed, her eyes fast on his.

"You're tempting me, Bucky Rollins!" she told him.

"I do want to give you something that really pleases you," he told her.

"You're a dear!" she answered, smiling, and laying her hand on his arm.

"But—but can you afford to make me such a gift?"

"Easily," he assured her. "I've heaps of money."

She caught her breath and hesitated. She didn't want to frighten him off. She would rather do without the hat than kill the golden goose; but if he had lots of money—

"We'll consider it settled, sha'n't we?" he begged.

"If you really wish it, Bucky," said Sylvia sweetly.

He had never had a girl address him in quite that demure, submissive way before. She was insinuating that he dominated her, that she yielded to his masculine forcefulness, that it was for him to do as he willed with her. She was a child for him to guide and direct.

His heart missed a beat. Warm blood pulsed madly through him.

"You sweet little thing, you!" he cried, and kissed her.

She gave him her lips willingly in payment for the hat—and considered it a good bargain.

He succeeded in kissing her only once. The rattle of the curtain-rings suddenly warned them to separate; and when the Frenchman returned with the two-hundred-dollar hat they were far apart. She was at the dressing-table, trying on the hat again. He was back on the settee.

The two-hundred-dollar hat was black, and was trimmed with lace and a buckle of brilliants. It was exceedingly gorgeous, and Sylvia's mouth watered for it. It suited her marvelously, too. But, though Bucky was eager to buy it for her, she demurred. She protested that she couldn't let him spend all his money on her; and she dragged him off as soon as the first hat was paid for and ordered sent to her address.

But he went back to the Frenchman's place the next morning and had the two-hundred-dollar hat sent to her anonymously. When she called him to account, he denied having sent it.

You can't return things to people when you don't know who sent them.

With the hat attended to, they started up the avenue on foot, at Bucky's suggestion, so that they could look into the shop-windows.

The fact of the matter was that Bucky had suddenly contracted a severe case of spenditis. He had enjoyed the hat incident, the intimacy of it, the pleasure it gave Sylvia, the attitude that the Frenchman adopted toward him, and, most of all, the kissing climax. He wanted to buy her more things—anything that was pretty and expensive, and that would add to her stunning appearance.

There's an uncanny fascination about buying things for a pretty woman in order to enhance her charms, and Bucky was experiencing it now. He wanted to buy everything they saw—from boxes of silk stockings to sunbursts. Nothing escaped his eye, neither silver picture-frames nor stuffed parrots on perches.

As for Sylvia, naturally she kept wondering how much money he had—growing more and more excited, and hoping against hope that her chance had come at last—her big chance, the one to which she had looked forward from childhood, but of which she had lately begun to despair. Most of the men she knew had other girls on their hands, or had already been plucked bare. It had never before been her fortune to get hold of one as young and inexperienced, as susceptible and open-handed, as Bucky. She only prayed that he was as rich as he seemed to be!

And so they continued on their way, Bucky urging her to let him buy this or that for her, Sylvia sweetly protesting, with her calculating eye on bigger things, until they reached one of the biggest and most expensive jewelry-shops in town. There, before the windows of the marble building, Bucky halted and revolted.

"I'm going to buy something in here, whether you like it or not. I've always wanted to buy something in here," he announced. "Isn't it your birthday?"

"It isn't," she answered. "My birthday's in December."

"Well, I didn't give you a present for your last birthday yet," Bucky reminded her triumphantly.

"But you didn't know me then! One doesn't give birthday gifts to a girl one doesn't know. I couldn't think of accepting one in that way!"

"Very well," said Bucky, shrugging, "then I'll give you a little souvenir of our acquaintance—something to commemorate our introduction. We'll have the date engraved inside to show how really important the day was."

"You foolish, foolish boy!" she cried, laughing.

"You peach!" he answered, sighing. "Will you come in and help select it, or must I abandon you heartlessly on the steps?"

"Are you determined to do this absurd thing?" she asked.

"I am!"

"Then I suppose I must give in to you—but you're awfully stubborn."

"Good!" said Bucky. "The sooner you realize that I'm master here, the better we'll get on together."

"O-ho!" she mocked, glancing back at him over her shoulder as she passed through the circular door.

"Can I be of service, sir?" asked the floor-manager, advancing toward them as they stood just inside, looking about.

"You can in just a minute," responded Bucky. Turning to Sylvia, he added: "What is it to be? Ring? Pin? Bracelet? Neck-chain?"

Sylvia looked confused, embarrassed, demure.

"I would like a nice bar-pin," she admitted. "Just something simple and inexpensive, you know," she explained to the manager.

"Leave that part of it to me," said Bucky. "I'm doing the buying. Where do you have nice bar-pins?" he asked.

The floor-manager courteously directed them, and they joined the crowd moving in that direction. In the department devoted to solitaires, they saw several young people engaged in selecting engagement-rings. Sylvia pointed them out to Bucky, and laughed about them. He saw nothing funny in them, however.

"I wish I were doing the same," he said, and, leaning nearer to her ear, added in a whisper: "With you!"

"You only think you do, for the moment, Bucky dear," she said. "Wait a little."

And her blue eyes promised him much—later on. But she knew perfectly well that she had no intention of becoming definitely, seriously involved with this boy. Her plans for the future did not include marriage and tying herself down to be any man's property. She knew her little book too well for that.

"Here we are," breathed Bucky in relief, as they found the proper counter and bent over it.

"But, Bucky, those are diamond bar-pins!" she gasped.

"Of course!"

"But—but I can't let you buy me anything expensive! They cost a fortune!"

"Is there any reason why I can't spend my own money as I please?" he asked patiently.

"No, but it would be dreadful of me to take it."

"Why?"

"It isn't done. Besides, where could I say I'd got it?"

"Oh, from an uncle in China!"

"But, Bucky, it's foolish for a girl to let herself get under obligation to a man—especially for a girl in my position. You know it is, Bucky!"

"What's the matter? Don't you trust me?" he demanded, turning to look squarely into her eyes.

"Of course I trust you," she answered.

"Then say no more about it. If you go on refusing to take things from me, I'll know you don't trust me. I should think you'd be a little unselfish, and realize the pleasure I get in doing things for you."

"Don't scold me," she pleaded. "I was only thinking of your money and—doing the right thing."

"I'll not let you go far wrong, never fear," he promised cheerfully, and then caught the eye of a salesman. "Some diamond bars, please," he ordered nonchalantly.

Sylvia dropped her lashes to hide the eager, avaricious light in her beautiful eyes.

"Diamonds alone, or combined with other stones?" asked the salesman.

"Let us see both kinds," said Bucky.

The salesman realized that he had just the sort of customer he liked, and he brought forth some of his choicest wares. Sylvia, dazzled, professed herself unable to choose, so it was Bucky who compared them, at a distance and close to, who examined the stones—although he knew nothing whatever about such things—who weeded out the wrong ones, and finally made his selection. The price was fifteen hundred dollars, and while Sylvia stood by in dazed and speechless silence, he paid it in cash.

The salesman was for putting the pin in a case for her, but she would have none of that. She wanted to wear it. She couldn't wait until it was pinned horizontally across the front of her white silk blouse.

And neither Bucky nor Sylvia could keep their eyes off it all through tea. It seemed to blaze with a light never seen on earth before. She could no longer be interested in looking about her, nor in Bucky's conversation, nor even in the good things they had to eat and drink. She counted the moments until she could show it to the other girls.

*(To be continued in the November number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE)*

### THE NATION'S NEED

Oh, for a leader, strong, invincible,  
Master of deeds and not of words alone—  
Words deft and rounded as a polished stone,  
Yet void of action as an empty shell!

Oh, for a leader whose clear vision sweeps  
The present and the future in its scope,  
At once a prophet and a nation's hope,  
Scaling the heights and sounding the far deeps!

Oh, for a leader whose unconquered fire  
Of patriot fervor throbs in heart and brain,  
To guard his country from each gibe or stain—  
Never to flinch, and always to aspire!

*William H. Hayne*

# HOW I LEARNED TO PLAY CHESS



by José R. Capablanca

I REMEMBER clearly my first game of chess. I had just passed my fourth birthday—twenty-three years ago. Depressed with a feeling of *ennui*, which a hot Havana day oftentimes induces, and having failed in my search for something interesting in the actions or stories of the soldiers of Morro Castle, where it was my wont to spend the greater part of my day, I directed my footsteps to one of the towers of the fort, in order to discuss with my father ways and means for routing this childish *ennui* of mine.

It might be well for me to explain that my father, though a poor chess-player, was a good soldier. He was then serving as a lieutenant in the cavalry division of the Spanish army stationed at Havana, in Morro Castle.

As a consequence, my companions were soldiers; my playground a military fort. Here I delighted to listen to the stories of wars, of strategic battles, of military heroes. Here the glamour of military life made its appeal to me. And here was I made to understand, young as I was, the importance to the soldier of a well-planned attack or defense.

As I entered my father's quarters, the scene that greeted my eyes at once aroused my interest. In the center of the

room sat my father, his head cupped in the palms of his hands, his eyes staring intently at the table. Opposite him sat a brother officer, in the same attitude. Both seemed to be thinking deeply. Neither uttered a word.

I approached closer, and obtained my first view of a chess-board.

Without disturbing the silence that prevailed, I took a position at the table, where I could view the proceedings comfortably. My boyish curiosity soon grew to wonder; and very shortly, after observing how my father was moving those peculiarly shaped figures from square to square of the board, I felt a sudden fascination for the game.

## CHESS AKIN TO WARFARE

The impression came upon me that this curious game must have a military significance, judging from the interest the two soldiers manifested. I then began to concentrate my mind on discovering how the pieces should be moved; and at the conclusion of the first game I felt sure that I had learned the rules for the movement of chessmen.

A second game was played. By this time the wonder of an "Arabian Nights" tale could not have held me more. I fol-



lowed each move eagerly. Having solved the first mystery of chess—the movement of the pieces—I sought to find out the principles that underlie the game.

Although I was only four years old at the time, I could soon appreciate the fact that a game of chess may be compared to a military battle—something that involves an attack on the part of one player, and a defense on the part of another. Action of this nature always made a deep impression upon me. I recall with what delight I used to listen to a soldier's story of the capture of a redoubt or the trapping of an army.

I believe, therefore, that my early and very strong attraction to the game of chess was due to the peculiar set of mind that I had developed as a result of my military environment, and also to a peculiar intuition.

On that particular afternoon there occurred an incident which launched me upon my chess career. During the second game that my father played, I noticed that he had moved one of his knights not in the prescribed way—a move that was evidently overlooked by his opponent. I maintained a dutiful silence till the close of the game, when I called my father's attention to what he had done.

At first he was inclined to dismiss my statement with the characteristic tolerance of a father who hears something foolish issue from the mouth of his offspring. My earnest protestations, arising from the exultation of having acquired some new and interesting knowledge, and the doubtful look of his opponent, caused him to believe that he might, after all, have been guilty of deceiving the other player. He knew, however, that I had never seen a game of chess before, and he felt safe in informing me very politely that he doubted very much whether I knew anything of what I was saying.

#### MY FIRST GAME OF CHESS

My reply was to challenge him to a game of chess. Whether he felt that I

had suddenly contracted dementia, or whether he wanted to save himself from further embarrassment in the presence of his friend, I do not know; but he sat down to play me, evidently foreseeing an early capitulation on my part.

When he saw that I knew how to handle the pieces, he became visibly disconcerted. When the game reached its close, I cannot say whether it was amazement, mortification, or pleasure that affected him most; for I had beaten him in my very first game of chess.

After this incident, my father's friends were profuse in their declarations that I was a boy of unusual powers. Some of them went so far as to call me a prodigy, and to predict that I should undoubtedly develop into the greatest chess master of the world. Yet, as I hark back to those days, I feel positive that I could not qualify as a child wonder. I do not recall that I was particularly blessed with the conventional accompaniments of genius, as commonly set forth in biographies—the precocious appreciation of the immensity of nature, of the beauty and complexities of the cosmos, and all that sort of thing.

As a matter of fact, I cherish as one of my special accomplishments my more than ordinary ability in that very mundane but good American game of baseball. Such a thing, surely, must be foreign to genius!

The persuasion of my father's friends finally caused him to take me to a brain specialist at Havana. While every one urged that my talents as a chess-player should be developed by a course of special training, my father much preferred that I should maintain the even tenor of the average boy's way. To the many suggestions of my possible exploitation in the field of chess, he persistently lent a deaf ear. So to the brain specialist we went—a very odious task for me.

That bespectacled and bewhiskered individual, after making an examination, announced in oracular manner that I was possessed of mental powers unusual for a



boy of my age, and advised that I should be prohibited from playing chess.

#### AT THE CHESS CLUB OF HAVANA

I was keenly disappointed, as my love for the game had become a passion. It was not until I was eight years of age that, upon the earnest solicitation of my father's friends, he consented to take me to the Chess Club of Havana, which at that time numbered among its members several players of established reputation. Here I resumed playing, but only to a moderate degree; and I soon had the pleasure of matching myself with the club's best players.

The first game that I played with an opponent of world-wide reputation was when Taubenhau, the famous Parisian expert, visited Havana. At that time I was just five years of age. Taubenhau offered me a queen, and when the first game was completed he played another with the same odds. Several years ago, when I was visiting Paris, after the San Sebastian tournament, I met Taubenhau, and in our conversation he spoke of these two games, saying that he had been under the impression that he had lost both of them.

The question has frequently been asked of me, to what do I attribute my precocious start in chess? Roughly I might

say that it was due partly to a mastery of the principles of the game, born of what I often felt to be a peculiar intuition, and partly to the possession of an abnormally developed memory—a memory far stronger than that of the average boy of four.

I recall how the soldiers of the fort at Havana would find diversion in leading forth the clerk of the garrison—the poor wretch!—and placing him opposite me. They would then read off large sums for us to add, divide, and multiply. I would invariably offer the correct answer before the clerk could get started. Furthermore, while I do not claim that my memory then was that of a Macaulay or a John Stuart Mill, yet it is a fact that at school, after a second reading of seven pages of history, I could recite them verbatim.

It is not correct to assume, however, that my chess ability depends upon an overdeveloped memory. In chess, memory may be an aid, but it is not indispensable. At the present time my memory is far from what it was in my early youth, yet my play is undoubtedly much stronger than it was then. Mastery of chess and brilliance of play do not depend so much upon the memory as upon the peculiar functioning of the powers of the brain.

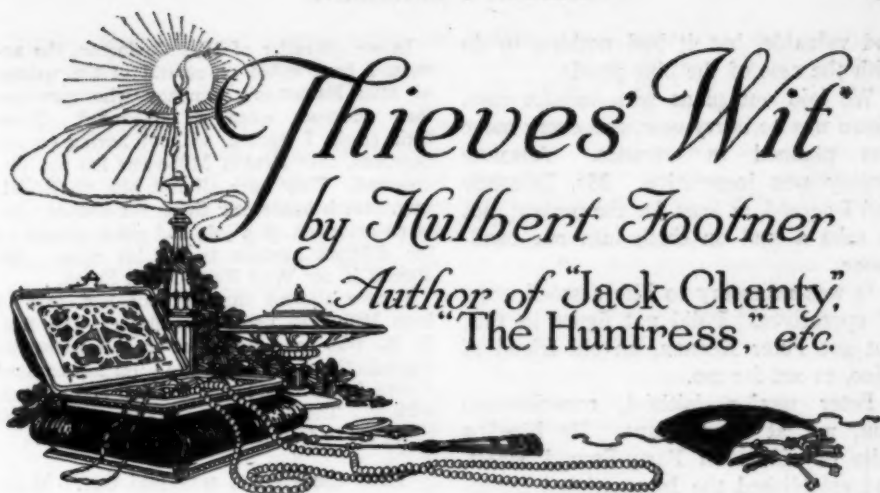
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#### THE HARDER TASK

INTO the utmost haze,  
Toward the outer deep,  
Vanished beyond my gaze  
The friend I could not keep;  
All sail spread to the wind,  
Ambitious soul all fire—  
And I was left behind  
To conquer vain desire.

Beyond the harbor bar  
Stretched all the world for him—  
Battle and wound and scar,  
Fame that no years might dim;  
To north, south, east, and west  
No intercepting line.  
He all his powers might test;  
A harder task was mine!

*Henry A. Smith*



#### SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

**T**HE story is told by Benjamin Enderby, who has established himself in New York as a "confidential investigator," or high-class private detective. His first client is Irma Hamerton, an actress, who has lost a valuable pearl necklace. Suspicion points to some member of her company or theater staff, for the pearls disappeared during a performance. It seems that Miss Hamerton is not so anxious to recover her jewels as to know who purloined them, and she insists that there shall be no recourse to the police. The reason for this, as Enderby discovers, is that she is loved by her leading man, Roland Quarles, that she at least partially returns his affection, and that she desires above all things to know that he is not the guilty man.

Enderby first consults Alfred Mount, owner of a Fifth Avenue jewelry-shop, from whom Miss Hamerton purchased the necklace. Mr. Mount promises his help, and undertakes to notify the trade of the loss, but can do nothing further. Next, calling himself William Faxon, and slightly disguising his appearance, the detective arranges to take a minor rôle in Miss Hamerton's play. He also secures a similar engagement for Sadie Farrell, a girl whom he has enlisted to help him.

In this way Enderby is enabled to study the other members of the company. His suspicions instinctively turn toward an actor named Kenton Milbourne, but such facts as he can discover seem to point to Quarles, and the question is apparently settled when he discovers the necklace in a safe in the leading man's apartment. Quarles, still denying his guilt, says good-by to Miss Hamerton and disappears. The actress, overwhelmed by the revelation of her lover's guilt, breaks down, and is obliged to close her season and disband her company.

Thinking the matter over, however, Enderby is not at all sure that Quarles is a thief, and Sadie Farrell tells him that he has hounded an innocent man to disgrace and probably to self-destruction. He decides to follow the young actor, and overtakes him just in time to save him from suicide. Gaining Quarles's confidence, Enderby learns that he bought the necklace from Jones & Sanford, a firm of jewelers on Maiden Lane, and that the pearls were approved as genuine by Mr. Frear, the pearl expert of the famous house of Dunsany & Co.

Here are all the indications of a wide-spread and intricate plot, for Enderby knows that Frear had been informed of the theft of Miss Hamerton's necklace, and must have recognized it. As he expected, he learns that Jones & Sanford have vanished, leaving no trace. Visiting Walter Dunsany, head of the Dunsany firm, he finds that Frear has left the country. Mr. Dunsany states it as a fact that there exists an organized and powerful corporation of jewel thieves, which he has always wished to expose and break up. He now decides to undertake this formidable task, and engages Enderby to direct the campaign.

#### XVII

**M**R. DUNSANY gave me to understand that he would grudge no reasonable expense in our campaign. I saw him every day—usually at his club, which was as safe a place as we

could find. I gave him my full confidence, of course. With Roland Quarles's consent I told him everything that had occurred up to that time. For his part, he had a whole file of evidence that he had quietly collected. He turned it over to me. It was interesting, and in the

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end valuable, but it had nothing to do with the case of the blue pearls.

We laid our plans with infinite care. There was no hurry now, and every move was planned in advance. Absolute secrecy was imperative. Mr. Dunsany and I agreed, at least for the present, not to take a soul on earth into our confidence.

It was necessary to hire a small army of operatives. I did not figure in this, but got Peter Keenan, an old friend of mine, to act for me.

Peter was a faithful, conscientious soul, not at all brilliant. He hired a suite of offices on Forty-Second Street, and established the International Detective Agency—of which Peter was the nominal head and Sadie Farrell the real directress. Here the operatives were hired and sent on their errands. Each did his little task, knowing nothing of the general plan.

Meanwhile Benjamin Enderby was to be found all day in his office on Fortieth Street, with his feet on the desk, conversing with his young friends or composing a new play. You see the second cryptogram had led me to suspect that my enemies were aware of my identity, and I desired to give the impression that I had dropped all activities in connection with jewels or jewel-thieves.

I communicated with Sadie by letter. Uncle Sam is at once the most public and the safest messenger. For emergencies we arranged a system of telephone-calls.

It would be a tedious task to set down all the routine work of the agency. There were mistakes, disappointments, and blind trails without number. To begin with, Sadie was ordered to trace Frear, the pearl agent, also Jones & Sanford, the bogus jewelers, and any of their employees. All this entailed great labor, and it was absolutely barren of result. These people seemed to have vanished into thin air.

In the case of Kenton Milbourne she was more successful. She wrote:

In my character of Miss Covington, the actress, I have called on several of the women of Miss Hamerton's company who gave me their addresses when we disbanded. From their gossip I learned, without having to ask questions, that Kenton Milbourne has not disappeared. They have all met him on Broadway. He is apparently living the ordinary life of an actor out of a job, and going around to the different agencies to list his name. His address is 292 West Forty-Ninth Street.

I have allotted three of our best men to keep Milbourne under surveillance. The first, D. B., who has been an actor, is working independently of the other two. He has engaged a room in the same house, and will make friends with M. The other two operatives, A. N. and S. C., are to trail him turn and turn about.

Thus the ground was laid out. Making my report to Mr. Dunsany, I said:

"It's all very well as far as it goes, but we must do some original work. Tracking the theft of Miss Hamerton's pearls is following a cold trail. Our strategy is hampered by the fact that the jewels have been recovered. We must branch out."

"What do you propose?" said he.

"Let us lay a tempting bait for a new robbery, and catch them red-handed."

"Go ahead!"

"Are you prepared to risk something choice in diamonds or pearls?"

"Anything I have in stock."

"Very well! First, however, we've got to get a man accepted into the innermost circle of the thief trust."

## XVIII

On the following Wednesday Mr. Walter Dunsany and part of his family sailed for Liverpool. The fact was prominently noticed in the newspapers. A squad of reporters saw him off at the pier, and got a statement from him on the country's business prospects.

I must offer my little tribute of admiration to Mr. Dunsany. I have yet to meet his equal for daring and gameness. Middle-aged men are not generally conspicuous for these qualities. When they are rich into the bargain, why, to hang on to what they've got is usually their

highest aim; but Mr. Dunsany insisted on playing the rôle of danger in our projected drama.

He eagerly accepted a part from which the most hot-headed young adventurer might have quailed. I would never have allowed him to go in ahead of me, but unluckily an expert knowledge of gems was required. That he had and I had not. He insisted, anyway, that I must be free for the general command of all our forces.

Twelve days after Mr. Dunsany's departure, one John Mattingly, in appearance a sober, decent, elderly artisan, arrived in the steerage of one of our speediest ocean ferry-boats, and went to Ellis Island with the other immigrants. Landed in due course at the foot of Manhattan Island, he gazed at the towering buildings with a wondering eye, and allowed himself to be guided to a humble hotel in the neighborhood.

I was not there to meet him, for a very good reason, but later in the day I received a note apprising me of his arrival. Two days later I had another telling me that having presented letters of recommendation, he had been engaged in the gem-setting shops of Dunsany & Co.

I cannot do better than quote from his own reports. Far from being the usual cut-and-dried affairs, they were little human documents of humorous observation.

Wednesday, June 3.

The morning after I landed, according to our program, I went to Dunsany's to apply for a job. I wonder if any merchant before me ever had the experience of besieging the doors of his own shop in a like humble capacity! Probably not.

I enjoyed the experience. As soon as I opened the door I began to learn things about my own place. I always thought that my democratic ideas encouraged my employees to treat me exactly like one of themselves, but I found that they did not—quite. Walking through the aisles I perceived a new atmosphere, a casualness, an indifference in the salesmen which shocked me at first, then made me want to laugh. The joke was on me!

My letter of recommendation, which I had

written myself, gained me the entrée to the present head of the firm—my son Edward. I approached his office with some nervousness. Here would be the first grand test of my disguise. Would the son recognize his father? If he did, would he have the wit not to give me away before others? If he did not, would I be able to keep my own face in the ludicrous situation?

I should say that in the matter of disguise I have followed your instructions carefully. The wig, or toupee, or transformation, with which you furnished me, completely changes my appearance. I have also applied the stubbly beard and short mustache, as you showed me how to do. I am letting my own hair grow beneath, and will soon be able to leave off the false, which will be a relief, as it is both hot and sticky. In addition, it occurred to me to leave aside certain dental work which cost me a lot of money. The result is startling, and very satisfactory to our purpose.

My clothes I bought ready-made in a London emporium. Need I say more? The hat is a wonder, a sort of decrepit music-master affair of black felt. It is undoubtedly third or fourth hand—or should I say fourth head? I took care to have it well fumigated.

Eddie did not recognize me. He favored me with some sharp glances, which discomposed me not a little, but this was only natural caution in engaging an unknown man. In our business we have to be careful. I was well pleased with Eddie's manner, succinct and businesslike, without a trace of arrogance. Much better than my own manner, I dare say.

Eddie was plainly annoyed by the situation, nor could I blame him. It was, of course, very irregular. In effect, we were breaking the alien-labor law, besides opening up the prospect of labor troubles in our own shop. I knew exactly what was passing in the boy's mind, and I was longing to reassure him; but I had to make believe to be slightly overawed in the presence of my own son.

He had no choice in the matter, because I had virtually instructed him to employ this Mattingly. In addition to the letter of recommendation, I had written to him from London, saying that I was sending such a man—an experienced jewel-setter, I had said—and had described Mattingly's appearance, so that he had no need to ask me to identify myself.

Finally, after asking a number of questions, to all of which I had the answers pat, Eddie engaged me. I followed him to an upper floor, hard put to it to keep from grinning at the idea of my boy showing me the way around the place. Fortunately, the spectacles I wear help me to preserve an owl-like gravity.

He took me to Ashley, the foreman of the gem-setting department. Ashley has been with us forty years. He is a surly, lovable old crab.



It was under Ashley that I got my training in handicraft twenty-five years ago.

Ashley regarded me with no favorable eye, but bowed to the mandate of the head of the firm. He gave me a boy's work—cleaning old settings—and kept a sharp watch on me. Later, I succeeded in mollifying him a little by showing a certificate of good standing in the English jewelers' union, and by asking the name of the local secretary, so that I could apply for membership here.

He has not forgiven me, though, for being put in over the youngsters' heads.

"A blank-blank furriner!" his irascible eye seems to say.

I thought I had taken the measure of the old man's irascibility, having worked under him.

"Here is one man in my shop who is not afraid to speak his mind to me," I should have said.

But Eddie had not been gone five minutes before I found that Ashley had never spoken *all* of his mind to me. I found, too, that his irascibility had been tempered to the boss's son. The boss himself, masquerading as a meek, alien workman, now received the full benefit of it.

I am glad I made the resolution, before coming here, not to let anything I might learn on the inside, apart from actual dishonesty, influence me in dealing with my men later. Already I confess my patience has been tried. I thought I was a radical myself, but I find I am away behind the times.

There is one young fellow, Mullen by name, a hothead, a socialist, who exasperates me every time he opens his mouth. He is so sure that his crazy ideas are right! Yet he is none the worse workman for that. He and old Ashley are the leaders of the two elements in the shop, and I'm sorry to say the old man generally comes off second best in their verbal encounters.

The first day, during one of their arguments, I was much amused, and a little alarmed, when the talk turned on me.

"You, with your socialist talk!" cried Ashley to Mullen, scornfully. "A man would think every boss was a horned devil! There's our old man, now—what's the matter with him?"

"I don't know him," said Mullen with a leer. "We ain't on visiting terms."

"He talks to us, simple and friendly, just like one of ourselves," said Ashley.

"Sure!" cried Mullen. "It don't cost him nothin'! I ain't seen him give up nothin' but talk, though. That's what he keeps you quiet with—a little soft talk, like strokin' a dog!"

"He don't set up to be no more than a man like myself," said my defender.

"Sure, and he is no more!" cried the other. "I've got as good an appetite for my meals as him, and my kids is as strong and handsome as his. But there he is sailing across the ocean

in a soot de luxe, and here am I sweating at his bench."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" asked Ashley; whereat all the men on his side crowded.

"Do?" cried Mullen. "I'm goin' to give him fair value for his wages, that's what I'm goin' to do; but I don't have to lick the hand that pats me!"

"A man can do what he likes with his own, I guess," said Ashley.

"Tain't his own!" was the surprising answer. "He didn't earn it. It was the surplus that his father made out of us workmen, and his grandfather before him."

"His grandfather started as a workman like ourselves," said Ashley; "only he was the best workman, so he went ahead."

"I doubt that!" said Mullen coolly. "Tain't the best workman that gets ahead, but the sharpest. Grandfather was sharp enough to get ahead of the other workmen. All right, I say; let him enjoy what he can get. But does that give his family the right to run us to the end of time?"

"What are you going to do about it?" asked Ashley again.

All his supporters laughed. Mullen turned to me unexpectedly.

"What have you got to say about it, mate? You know what they think about such things across the water. Give us your ideas!"

"I don't know the boss," I said feebly.

"How can I tell?"

"I don't mean him," said Mullen scornfully.

"He's nothing but a rich man. I mean about labor and capital."

I shook my head.

"Ah! They tame them over there just like they do here, I see," said Mullen, turning away.

I would like to fire that fellow when I get out of this—but, of course, in common decency I must not.

Meanwhile, I suppose you are wondering what all this has to do with our case. Have patience with me. I am so absolutely alone in my new life that I must have somebody to air my thoughts to. The evenings are the worst. The club calls me with a siren voice. Eddie's wife is away, too, and I think of the boy dining alone. I wish we had taken him into our confidence, but I suppose it was wiser not to.

I have changed my boarding-place. Couldn't stand the fare at Mrs. McMahon's. I am now at a French place on West Twenty-Ninth Street. It is humble enough to suit my altered station in life, but the cooking, being French, is not impossible. I have mitigated my lot by buying a jug of excellent Bordeaux at Bardin's, which I have with my dinner without exciting suspicion. I am aiming to get the name of a "character," which will enable me to do pretty much as I please.



The only break I have made so far was upon the avenue yesterday. I was on my way home from work, and my wits were wool-gathering. I was dreaming, I suppose, of where I would like to go for dinner. Along came Warner Macklin, an elegant old dandy and a club acquaintance of mine. Without thinking, I nodded to him as I would ordinarily. You should have seen his affronted stare. The old snob! Anyhow, it testifies to the efficacy of my disguise.

If you would like to look me over, I will be walking up and down in front of the dairy lunch on Thirty-Fourth Street, east of Sixth Avenue, at half past twelve o'clock to-morrow, Thursday.  
J. M.

Tuesday, June 9.

I have not written you since Saturday, because there was nothing new to report, and I didn't want to take up your time with any more discussions on labor and capital. I am receiving a liberal and very salutary education in these matters. After working at my bench all day I find my point of view much changed; but I do not like that Mullen fellow!

I am pretty well shaken into my job by now. The local union is considering my application for membership favorably, so I am not a bone of contention in the shop. I hope there is something more exciting than this ahead.

I have neither seen nor heard anything suspicious in any of my fellow employees. I would be willing to swear that they are all honest; but you have told me—others, too—that I'm too ready to believe the best of my fellow creatures, so I'm keeping an open mind.

To-day there was a little shake-up in the shop, on account of vacations. I got a step up. Ashley put me at the bench where jewels are removed from old settings on orders to be reset. This is exactly what we need to carry out our plans, and it comes sooner than we hoped—but not too soon for me. However, I do not mean to rush things, but will proceed with due caution.

My heart still yearns every time I pass a first-class restaurant.  
J. M.

### XIX

At this stage I cannot better carry my story forward than by continuing to quote from the reports of different operatives. To me these are fascinating documents. Their sober matter-of-factness is more thrilling than the most exciting yarn. With a wealth of seemingly irrelevant detail they build up a picture more convincing than any except those of a master of fiction.

One has to be in the secret, of course. The operatives themselves are not supposed to know what it is all about, though they may guess a little. But to be in the secret of a case, and to read the reports bearing on it from a hundred angles, gives one a strange sense of power.

### REPORT OF D. B.

Thursday, June 4.

According to my instructions, I applied for board at 292 West Forty-Ninth Street—Mrs. Atwood, landlady. I gave my name as Winston Darnall, and made out I was a character actor just in from the road. I engaged the rear hall room, top floor. The place is an ordinary actors' house, considerably run down. The landlady has only lately bought the business from another woman, so it hasn't the familiar, friendly air of a long-established place.

At the supper-table I recognized Kenton Milbourne from the description furnished. He's an unusual-looking man—unusually homely. He doesn't keep to himself at all, like a fellow with something on his mind. He seems to be on good enough terms with the other boarders, but most of them keep out of his way, because he's such a tiresome talker. There are one or two old fellows who go around with him. They sit in the parlor and talk by the hour about what wonderful actors they are.

Milbourne has the large front room on the third floor. As luck would have it, the hall room adjoining was vacant, and there is only a thin, board partition between, because the hall room was originally an alcove. I judged, however, that this was too much of a good thing. I was afraid of taking the hall room, for fear of putting M. wise. Maybe later, when we're friends, I can move.

I wasn't in any rush to pick up Milbourne. Thought I'd better wait a while and give him a chance to make up to me.

Meanwhile, I jollied the landlady. She was a talker, like all of them. Milbourne, it seems, is her pet. She holds him up as a model for the other boarders, because he paid her four weeks' board in advance when her rent fell due. This seems to indicate that he means to stay a while.

All the boarders look up to Milbourne with a kind of respect, because he's just closed his season with a first-class company, while the rest are mostly with repertory companies, and cheap road shows.

The second night I was there, Milbourne braced me in the parlor. Looking for a new listener, I guess. He started in to tell me what a hit he made with the Irma Hamerton company. If this man is a crook, he's the smoothest

article I ever ran up against; because he isn't smooth at all. He talks all the time about himself, as simple as a child, but at that he don't tell you much. He's got a dull eye, which seems to take in nothing, and he talks in a slow, monotonous way, saying a thing over and over until you're almost doped.

A couple of nights later some of the younger boarders were having a bit of a rough-house in the parlor, and M. asked me up to his room, where we could talk in peace. His room was sort of bare. He don't show any photographs or gimcracks. It seems he never unpacks his trunk. It was a big trunk, even for an actor, and packed neat and full as a honeycomb. Whenever he wants anything he unlocks it, takes out what he's after, and locks it again, even though he's right in the room. The key is on a chain fastened to his waistband.

His talk was mostly about Irma Hamerton and her company. He told me what he says is the truth of the story about her sickness, and the unexpected closing in the middle of good business. She was in love with her leading man, Roland Quarles, according to him. Nothing was too bad for him to say about Quarles.

Here my operative went into considerable detail as to Milbourne's opinion of Roland. Most of it I will omit, since it was no more than meaningless abuse.

I didn't take much stock in all this. It is the way a poor actor likes to talk about one who rises above him.

About Quarles and Miss Hamerton—Milbourne said that just as she was going to marry him she found out that he had a wife already. Without exactly saying so, he let on that it was he, Milbourne, who had put her wise to the young man. She had hysterics, he said, and broke up the show. As proof of his story he said that Quarles had disappeared and nobody knew where he was, not even his old servant.

As I talk more with Milbourne I see that he isn't so simple as he likes to make out. He has a way of sandwiching in little questions in his dull talk which amounts to pretty effective cross-examining in the end. He didn't get anything on me, though. My story hasn't any holes in it yet. I have an idea that I've had more experience in acting than he has.

Sometimes he lets slip a clever remark that don't fit in with his character of a bonehead at all. For instance, we were talking about the Chatfield case that all the papers are full of now, and Milbourne says:

"Put a police helmet on any man, and right away his brain seems to take the shape of it. Cops think as much alike as insects. Let a crook once get on to their way of thinking,

and he can play with them like a ball on a rubber string!"

He let this out by accident. Afterward he looked at me sharp to see if I had taken anything amiss. I never let on.

I have been in this house a week now, and Milbourne and I are supposed to be quite intimate friends. Last night, on my way upstairs, I saw a light under his door; so I knocked. His door is always locked. He wasn't any too glad to see me, but he couldn't very well keep me out, because he hadn't started to undress yet. He was having a little supper—a bottle of a sirupy kind of wine, and biscuits with some blackish stuff, which he said was caviar.

I didn't take any, but I marked the labels, and to-day I went into a swell store and inquired the prices. The wine was Imperial Tokay, and costs two dollars and fifty cents for a small bottle. The caviar was a dollar for a tiny pot.

I give this for what it's worth. Seems funny, if a man has a taste for such swell eats, he should put up at a joint like Mrs. Atwood's.

D. B.

#### REPORT OF A. N.

Saturday, June 6.

Operative S. C. and I were instructed to trail a certain K. Milbourne, supposed to be an actor, and to report on his habits and his associates. We were furnished with his description, and sent to watch the building at 292 West Forty-Ninth Street, where he boards. This house is a few doors from Eighth Avenue. We kept watch from outside a corner saloon over the way. We turned up our collars and stood around like the regular corner loafers.

At 10.05 A.M. our man came out and walked up the long block to Broadway. We followed on the other side of the street. He turned down Broadway with the crowd. We split up, one on each side of Broadway.

He often stopped in front of store-windows, but didn't seem to look into the windows so much as sideways, to see who was passing. Finally he turned in at 1402 Broadway, a big office-building. I slicked up and went after him. Went up in the same elevator. He gave everybody in the car a sharp look. Got out at the eighth floor, and went into an office marked "Mrs. Mendoza, Theatrical Agency."

I went back down-stairs to wait. This building has an entrance on Broadway and one on Thirty-Ninth Street. S. C. took the Broadway door, and I watched the side street.

Forty minutes later, at 11.15, he came out by my door. He walked around into Broadway, and S. C. picked us up again. He took us down as far as Thirty-Fourth, and then turned around and went back to Forty-Second, without leaving

Broadway or stopping anywhere. Turned west on Forty-Second, and went into the office of the D. & E. Booking Agency in the Forrest Theater.

He stayed there twenty-five minutes, then came out and went down the west side of Broadway. At Thirty-Ninth Street met another actor, and stood with him twenty minutes, talking loud, and looking around them the way they do, to see if anybody is noticing. The talk was all theatrical gossip, which I was instructed not to report.

Looked at his watch and went on down to the second block below, where he walked up and down about seven times, stopping at each end to look in the same store-window, and then coming back. We watched from a music-store, where we were making out to listen to the piano-player.

At 12.50 he met a man as if by surprise. They greeted each other so loud that everybody rubbered; but it was all a stall. Right away they came down to business, and talked low and serious to each other.

My partner and I brushed against them, but we couldn't hear much. Too much noise in the street. I heard Milbourne say:

"The grub is rotten! More than flesh and blood—"

"My dear fellow," his friend replied, "it's worth it, isn't it? Be reasonable. You're safe. We're all safe—"

The two of them turned north, walking arm in arm, still talking low. At the Forty-Ninth Street corner they parted. Milbourne turned west, on his way home, presumably, and his friend continued north. S. C. went with M., and I took after the stranger.

He was a big, fat man, but energetic. He looked like a theatrical manager or a promoter. He wore a silk hat and a cutaway coat which flapped out as he walked. He had very big feet, which slapped the pavement loudly as he walked along in his energetic way. It was a regular fat man's walk, the knees giving a little with every step. Height, about five foot ten; weight, about two hundred and twenty; dark-brown hair and eyes; eyes with a bright, hard expression. Heavy brown mustache with curled ends. Carried a cigar in his mouth, which he never lighted, but kept twisting around while he talked.

At Fiftieth Street he crossed over and went down the subway stairs, spry as a kid. Got on the first train; I took a seat in the adjoining car. At the next station, Columbus Circle, he suddenly jumped up and left the train; but I was with him. He stayed on the station platform. For a little while the two of us were alone there. He gave me a good, hard look. When the next train came along he took it. I was in the next car again.

At Seventy-Second Street he got out again. This time he went up to the street. He stood on the corner for a while. I watched from behind the glass doors of the subway station.

I thought he was waiting for somebody, but suddenly he made a run for a passing car. I had to hump myself to get it, but I did.

For near an hour we rode around, hopping from car to subway, and back to a car again, with a ride in a taxi in between. Of course, I knew by this time that he was on to me, but I stuck, hoping for a bit of luck.

Later, at the Ninety-Sixth Street station, he darted down the steps again, me a good second. This station is always more or less crowded. A woman blocked me at the gate, and he gained a few seconds. There was a train waiting. Just as I reached it the guard closed the door in my face. Fatty was inside. As the train started, he turned around and thumbed his nose at me. I felt cheap.

A. N.

#### REPORT FROM AUSTRALIA

Melbourne, May 20.

Referring to your inquiry of the 10th ultimo respecting one Kenton Milbourne, said to be an actor, formerly of this place, we beg to report as follows:

You are in error in supposing that Kenton Milbourne formerly acted in Australia and sailed for America last year. Mr. Milbourne is at present a member of a theatrical company touring the state of New South Wales. Mr. Milbourne has never been to America. We enclose one of his published pictures, which you will see at a glance is not that of the man whose picture you sent us.

Mr. Milbourne is an actor of character parts, fairly well known in the profession here, though not of wide public reputation. His personal character is of the best. His real name is John Whittlesey, and he comes of respectable parents in moderate circumstances, still living in the town of Perth, Western Australia.

As to the photograph you enclosed, we are informed by a friend of Mr. Milbourne that this is undoubtedly Evan Whittlesey, younger brother of John. Evan, it appears, is the black sheep of the family. He went to America ten years ago, after having been implicated in the robbery of Morton's Bank, Melbourne. No proceedings were ever taken against him.

From the same informant we learn that no one in Australia has heard of Evan Whittlesey since he went away, except possibly his brother, who is reticent on the subject.

At this writing we are unable to furnish any information regarding Evan Whittlesey's early life beyond what is contained in the general statement that he was "wild"—that is to say, a trial to his parents and to his respectable brother, whose stage name he appears to have

borrowed for his American activities. If you desire us to go to the expense of a more thorough investigation of Evan Whittlesey's past, please authorize by cable.

Trusting to be favored with your future commands, *et cetera*.

WILLARD, WILLARD & GAINES.

## XX

THE next report from which I will quote is Sadie's. It contained an unpleasant surprise.

In order to make the matter clear, I must briefly explain the arrangements of the International Detective Agency. We had three offices *en suite* on the sixth floor of a building on West Forty-Second Street. The door of the first room faced the elevators, and upon it was lettered our sign. Within was a neat railing, behind which sat Peter Keenan, the ostensible head of the establishment, and an ornamental stenographer. The door to the adjoining room was hidden behind a tall file.

The second room was a little one which the employees supposed to be Keenan's private office, but which in reality was designed as a sanctum for Sadie. There was a telephone here, by which she could talk to me in safety. Sadie had her own door on the corridor, and was never seen in the front room.

The third office, which was at right angles to the first and second, was intended for the operatives in general, when we were obliged to have them in. They were not supposed to come in without being instructed to do so. The other operatives looked on Sadie as one of themselves, and considered Keenan the boss. The door to the third room opened on a side corridor, so that the men were never seen around the front office.

### REPORT OF S. F.

Friday, June 12.

Last evening at 5.15 Operative S. C. came into the office without instructions. He had been told, like the others, to mail in his reports and to keep in touch with Mr. Keenan by telephone. The excuse he gave was that the man he was trailing had led him around so fast and so far that it had used up all his money.

I had Mr. Keenan give him some money and call him down, and thought no more about it. Unfortunately, it appears to-day that his disobedience has had very unfortunate results.

This morning I heard loud talking in the front office. Mr. Keenan explained later that a queer old man had come in, and had told a long, rambling story about being persecuted. It seems that he wanted to engage the agency to protect him. It seemed a natural enough thing—we have had these harmless cranks before.

Mr. Keenan soothed him down by telling him that we were too busy to do proper justice to his case, and referred him to the police-station. Neither of us thought anything more about it.

This afternoon, shortly before five, I heard the old man's voice again in the outer office. Mr. Keenan had stepped out to mail some papers to you. The old man was excited, and I could tell by Miss Reilly's voice that she was frightened, so I went to her assistance.

I saw a bent, old man in shabby black, with wild, straggly hair, broken teeth, and red-rimmed eyes—a repulsive sight. The instant I laid eyes on him I felt sure that he was not insane. His manner was both servile and threatening. It was like stage insanity—incoherent jabbering and wild gestures. The girl was frightened half out of her wits.

I asked him what he wanted, and he calmed down at once. His speech was unintelligible, as if he had some of those tablets in his mouth that actors use to make their voices thick. He made no more trouble. He bowed and smirked and backed out of the door. The last thing I heard was a silly kind of laugh.

By this time I was full of suspicions. He had quieted down much too quickly. Besides, there was something familiar about the horrible old man.

I had Miss Reilly inquire of the elevator-boys. They said the old man had been in *three* times—once last evening, as well as twice to-day. Last night he came up in the elevator with Operative S. C. To-day, I believe, he hung around down-stairs until he saw Mr. Keenan go out.

S. C. called up about this time to report that Milbourne had not left his boarding-house all day. Mr. Keenan questioned the operative over the phone, at my prompting, and we discovered that S. C. had no proof that Milbourne was in the house. We learned that S. C. had lost him about half-past three o'clock yesterday afternoon, among the several entrances to a department-store. He had merely supposed that he had gone home later.

I then ventured to call up Milbourne's boarding-house. Of course, if he had been there, I would have lost the connection, but he was not. His landlady told me that he had telephoned her yesterday afternoon that he had been called



out of town, and not to expect him home until to-night, which shows how little we can depend on these operatives. Since talking to this woman I have received D. B.'s report from inside the house, confirming what she told me.

Puzzling over in my head what it could be that gave the old man a familiar look, I suddenly got it. Do you remember that when Milbourne first joined Miss Hamerton's company he played the part of the old forger, afterward given to Richards? The management thought Milbourne's idea of it was too realistic, but Milbourne himself was childishly proud of his make-up in that part. He showed us a photograph, do you remember? Well, that was the same old man—wrinkles, scraggly hair, mean smile, and all; and the same clothes!

It is easy to figure out now what happened. After giving the operative the slip in the department-store, Milbourne went to some friend's room, or thieves' hangout, and disguised himself. He then returned to the neighborhood of the boarding-house on Forty-Ninth Street, and watched the watchers there.

When S. C. was relieved by A. N., at five o'clock, Milbourne followed S. C. into the office. He was smart enough to see on his first visit to-day that Mr. Keenan was not the real head of the office, and so he bothered us until I betrayed myself. Hence the laugh when he left.

I need not say how sorry I am for the accident. I blame myself quite as much as S. C. Luck played right into Milbourne's hand this time. I see how important it is. He knows of the connection between you and me, consequently all your trouble to let it be supposed that you are out of the case goes for naught.

I have replaced S. C. with the new man, W. J., who came so well recommended. I have put S. C. at clerical work. Shall I discharge him altogether?

S. F.

The next two reports are from the man calling himself John Mattingly, employed in the gem-setting department at Durisany's.

#### REPORT OF J. M.

Monday, June 15.

On Saturday afternoon, after work, according to your instructions, I took one of the unset diamonds with which I am provided to Mandel's pawn-shop, on Third Avenue. I was very glad to have the second act of the drama open and the fun begin.

To tell the truth, I am very weary of the work-bench at Dunsany's this hot weather. If I ever return to my proper character I shall have more sympathy for my workmen. I believe now that it is not poverty that makes the working classes restless so much as monotony.

Mandel's, as you know, is a large and pros-

perous three-ball establishment near Fifty-Seventh Street. The proprietor is a youngish man, a typical pawnbroker, with eyes as hard and bright as shoe-buttons. Such eyes, I am sure, would look on at the murder of a parent unconcerned, if there was anything in it. I believe you are right in your estimate of the man. Good as his legitimate business appears to be, no doubt he is not averse to the other kind, if it looks safe.

But he was afraid of me. He offered to lend me money on my diamond, but declined to purchase. He demanded to know how it had come into my possession. I replied with a long and affecting tale of the hardships of an immigrant couple no longer young. It was our last bit of property, I said, the stone out of my wife's engagement-ring. The ring itself she still wore with its empty setting.

Such was the pathos of the tale that I almost succeeded in convincing myself that it was true. It didn't matter, of course, whether the pawnbroker believed it or not, but it had to be a good story on the face of it, because it would be fatal to my chances of success if I gave the impression of being a fool.

The bright eyes gave no sign one way or another. One could scarcely expect a pawnbroker to be moved by a hard-luck story. He told me to come back on Monday at noon, and he would see what he could do for me.

I hastened up there as soon as we were released for the lunch-hour to-day. There were two men loitering in the store—men of the same kidney as the astute proprietor, apparently, and very sprucely dressed. Mandel himself ignored me for the moment, and this precious pair gave me the "once over," as they say.

I could feel their eyes boring into me like gimlets. However, it is possible to be too sharp to be discerning, and they were deceived. A scarcely perceptible sign passed between them and the pawnbroker, and the latter suddenly became aware of his shabby customer.

He now showed me what he intended for a real friendly air. He couldn't buy my diamond himself, he said, but seeing that he felt so sorry for me, he would send me to a diamond-broker he knew, who would probably do business with me, if I satisfied him that it was on the level. He gave me an address near by. I enclose the card, but neither the name nor the address mean anything, of course.

I went there at once, risking a call-down from the foreman if I was late getting back to the shop. It was a room on the second floor of a typical Third Avenue house—shop below, furnished rooms above, and the Elevated trains pounding by the windows. Evidently there had been a hasty attempt to make it look like an office. A desk had been brought in and the bed removed.

Behind the desk sat a fat man, rolling a cigar between his thick lips, and trying to look as if he were not expecting me. He looked prosperous in a common way, with his silk hat on the back of his head, and his immense, gaping cutaway.

His face was red and what passes for good-humored, with little pig eyes lost in fat. A huge mustache with curled ends decorated it—the kind of mustache that I thought even New York politicians had given up nowadays. In a phrase, the man looked like a ward-leader of fifteen years ago. The most characteristic thing about him was his bustling energy, unusual in one so fat.

This alleged diamond-broker was making out to be very much occupied with business, and he kept me waiting for some time. As soon as he took the diamond in his hand I saw that he knew nothing about stones. He didn't even have a glass to examine it. Evidently the word had been passed to him that it was all right.

But, if he knew nothing about diamonds, he was well experienced in humanity. He put me through a grueling cross-examination, which I supported as best I could. My delicate problem was to lead him to suspect that I was a crook without letting him think that I was a fool. To this end I elaborated the story of my old wife's engagement-ring. He listened to it with a leer in his little eyes, as much as to say:

"Pretty good, old fellow! But you needn't take all that trouble with me!"

He expressed himself as being satisfied, and we passed to the discussion of the price. I asked something near the stone's real value. He laughed, and offered me one-fifth of it. Presently we were hotly engaged in human-kind's first game, bargaining. He loved it. Unfortunately I was handicapped by the necessity of getting back to work, and we agreed on a price which was about a quarter of the stone's value.

No doubt he would have had more respect for me if I had held out longer. He paid me out of an enormous roll of greasy bills.

I was sorry to see the stone go. It was a good one, nearly two carats. Of course, it was not safe to mark it in any visible way, but I have had this and the other decoy diamonds carefully described and photographed, so that we shall have no difficulty in identifying them later.

As I was about to leave he shook my hand in friendly fashion, and, still with that indescribable leer, expressed a hope that we might do further business together.

I mumbled something about a pair of earrings.

"Good!" he said. "Let me see them. Even if you don't want to let me have them I'll appraise them for you, so you won't get cheated.

Come to me! I'm looking for a better office, so you'll probably find me gone from here. What's your address? I'll let you hear from me."

I declined to give it.

"Cautious, eh?" He laughed uproariously. "You needn't mind *me!* Mandel will tell you where you can find me."

I got back to my work just in time to avoid a fine. J. M.

#### REPORT OF J. M.

Thursday, June 18.

I suspected that I might be trailed from the alleged diamond-broker's office back to my work, and hoped that I should be. Evidently I was. Yesterday, on my way to my luncheon place on Thirty-Fourth Street, I ran into my fat friend. He came toward me with his coat-tails flying. He has very large feet, which slap the pavement resoundingly. His knees have a way of bending a little, which gives an undulatory motion, a sort of roll, to his walk.

He hailed me blithely, and immediately announced that he was looking for a bite to eat. Somewhat sullenly, for I did not wish to appear too glad to see him, I confessed that I was on the same errand, and we turned into the dairy restaurant together. He laid himself out to win my liking. His loud, jolly, fat-man ways provide a cover for a good deal of astuteness.

It was my game to make out that I was startled to be found in that neighborhood, and that my conscience was none too good. It was his game to put me at my ease, and to have it understood that everything went between friends. Nothing was said, however, about his business or mine.

I stuck to my lately-arrived-immigrant story, and he sympathized with my loneliness in a strange land. He was a bachelor, he said, and often lonesome himself.

This line led presently to an invitation to join him last night for a little sociability at the Turtle Bay Café, on Lexington Avenue. I accepted it. I am sure, by his eagerness to cultivate my acquaintance, that he knows I work in Dunsany's.

I met him at eight o'clock, and we secured a little table to ourselves in a sort of alcove. The Turtle Bay is just one of the usual saloons—mahogany, plate glass, and electric lights. The principal lure of such places is the dazzling flood of light they cast on the pavement. They have discovered the subtle psychological appeal of light. Away with night and its terrors!

My fat friend was liberally hospitable. I allowed my suspicious, sullen manner to be charmed away by degrees. In a way he is really entertaining, with his gross humor and

rude vitality. I suppose almost any one can charm when he really wishes to do so. The cloven hoof, however, peeped out in his brutal snarls at the newsies and beggars who came to our table.

On the whole, I enjoyed myself. It was a lot better than mooning in my wretched room, or wandering the sultry streets thinking of the cool and comfortable club. Our will being good on both sides, we got along famously. No actual confidences have passed between us yet, but we are ripe for them.

As we mellowed together, I allowed it to peep out that I had a bitter grudge against society, and would stop at nothing to indulge it. He enthusiastically applauded my sentiments.

"Life is a bank," he said, "that's got to be busted into, if a man wants to enjoy any of the good things!"

I am to call him "George Pawling." We have a date to meet at the Turtle Bay again to-morrow night. I hinted that I might have another diamond or two.

I was glad to hear from you that this man is undoubtedly one of the gang. So I'm on the right track!

J. M.

## XXI

I DON'T want to give too much of my operatives' reports. It is not to be expected that anybody would have the same absorbing interest as myself in all the ramifications of the case; so I will resume my story in the ordinary way.

After the catastrophe, it will be remembered, Miss Hamerton and Sadie had gone into the country to a little retreat I chose for them. After a day or two, seeing that Miss Hamerton could be left alone—would, in fact, be better alone—Sadie had returned to the case.

Later—that is, about the beginning of June—Miss Hamerton was so far recovered as to be able to go to Southampton and open her cottage for the season. Now, toward the end of the month, I learned that she had come to town for a few days, to talk over next season's plans with her manager; all of which was encouraging as far as her health and spirits were concerned.

Thinking of my friend Roland, I was not anxious to see her recover too quickly. Miss Hamerton was unaware that I was still busy on her case.

I was shy about going to see her. Considering her position and mine, my feeling was that if she wished to keep up the connection she ought to give me some sign. I confess I was a little hurt that I had not received any.

One day, as I was returning to the office after lunch, I met her strolling up Fifth Avenue with Mount. When I caught sight of her, the whole street brightened for me with her loveliness. I watched her coming for half a block before she saw me. She seemed well; she had a good color, and her face was vivacious—more vivacious than it used to be, perhaps a little *too* vivacious. She seemed to have become aware of the necessity of vivacity. When she laughed her eyes were somber.

She was dressed in a strange, bright shade of blue. Few women could have carried off that dazzling color so well. At her girdle and on her hat she had touches of coral-red. She walked through the crowd with the beautiful unconsciousness that was part of her stage training. The staring, the whispering, the craning of necks neither troubled nor pleased her.

Alfred Mount, who was no child in the world, could not quite hide his pride at being seen with her. He, too, was gorgeously arrayed—a little too well-dressed for a man of his age; but I had to grant his youthful air and good looks.

I raised my hat, and was for keeping on, but she stopped short.

"Are you going to pass me by?" she cried with charming reproachfulness.

I became as proud and conceited as Mount, thus to be singled out by her. Everybody stared at me. Mount's greeting was affable and chilly—like winter sunshine. I fell into step beside them.

"Why haven't you been to see me?" she demanded.

"Why didn't you let me know you were in town?" I countered.

"I didn't like to bother such a busy man," she said.

This to me from her!

"How is business, Enderby?" Mount asked in a faintly sneering tone.

"Poor," I said calmly. "Everybody appears to be behaving himself."

"Ah!" said he.

"What stories he could tell us if he would!" my dear lady said admiringly.

I smiled, as I suppose was expected of me. Little did she suspect that the only case I had was hers!

We walked on, chatting idly. What was said wouldn't be worth repeating, I expect, even if I could remember it. For me the mere sound of her voice was enough.

There was no mention of the unhappy things that were past. We were all engaged in a tacit conspiracy to look forward. She told me of a new play that had been offered her. She insisted that I must read it before the matter was finally determined.

"You have such wonderful good sense," she said; "and not at all affected by the actor's point of view."

Mount's face looked a little pinched at this warm praise. Had he been consulted about the play, I wondered?

If he really honored me with his jealousy, he was foolish. I did not dream of aspiring to be anything more than her honest, faithful friend. Sadie, I hoped, was my destined mate, while Irma Hamerton was—why, she was the sun over us all. Sadie herself felt toward her just as I did.

On the other hand, I *was* jealous of Mount. I considered him presumptuous to aspire to our sun, as he plainly did. He wasn't half good enough. Half? He wasn't worthy to tie her shoe! Besides, I was anxious about Roland Quarles.

At Forty-Second Street they were turning west, toward the theater district, and I bade them good-by. Miss Hamerton covered me with confusion by asking me to dine with her at her hotel the same night.

"Is it to be a party?" I asked.

"No, indeed!" she said. "Nobody but Alfred."

This "Alfred" was new. It had always been "Mr. Mount" before. The change set my teeth on edge.

I accepted, and left them.

Dinner was served in her exquisite little drawing-room, which was loaded with sweet peas. For some reason that I have forgotten, the tiresome old Mrs. Bleecker was not in evidence. Nevertheless, I did not have a good time. I believe none of us had.

Alfred still stuck in my crop. I reflected jealously that if it had not been for the accidental meeting with me, Mount would have been alone with her. No doubt he was thinking of that, too. Everything from the *hors-d'oeuvre* to the *chartreuse* was exquisite, but I had no zest in it.

It was Alfred this and Alfred that. It really seemed as if my dear lady was rubbing it in. I supposed that it was her delicate way of letting me know her intentions. I fancied I perceived a certain apprehensiveness as to how I was going to take it. Perhaps I flattered myself.

Anyhow, it was enough to make the angels weep. She was not in the least in love with Mount—she could not possibly have been so; but, after the way of dear, ignorant women, she was trying to persuade herself that she was. Hence the Alfreds. I thought of my passionate young friend eating his heart out in a hall bedroom, and my food choked me.

Irma made some half-laughing reference to the relief of being freed from Mrs. Bleecker's presence.

"If she bothers you, why don't you let her go?" said Mount.

"Poor soul! What would she do?" said Irma. "She'd never get another situation, she's so disagreeable. Besides, I don't know that I could do any better."

"Hardly worth while," said Mount. "You won't need a chaperon much longer."

This was plain enough. It killed conversation for a moment or two. I was sure Irma sent an imploring glance in my direction, but I kept my eyes on my plate.



was she imploring me not to judge her, or imploring me to support her in what she meant to do, or imploring me to save her from it? How was a man to tell?

I am sure she would have been glad if I had forced the question into the open, but I didn't know how to do it. True, I could have dropped a bomb in the middle of the table that would have shattered Mount's hopes, merely by telling what I knew of Roland; but my lips were sealed by my promise to him.

Mount made some facetious remark, at which all of us laughed, and we fled from the disconcerting subject; but it seemed as if we could not avoid it for long. The most innocent line of conversation had a way of landing us squarely in front of it.

"Have you heard that Beulah Maddox has started to get another divorce?" Irma said.

Miss Maddox had been the heavy woman in our company.

"That is the eleventh time she has started proceedings, isn't it?" said I.

"Constant in inconstancy!" murmured Mount.

"Miss Maddox's emotions are like soap-bubbles," I said.

"Do you think women are fickle?" Irma asked with a direct look in which there was something very painful.

Thinking of poor Roland agonizing over a shorthand book until after midnight every night, I could not help but shrug slightly.

"If they are, it's the men's fault!" said Irma bitterly. "The men I have known would make constancy in women an indication of imbecility!"

So there we were again!

"Funny, isn't it," drawled Mount, "how the sexes have no use for each other, yet love-stories still sell?"

I excused myself early, on the plea of business, and went direct to Roland. Here I find I am a little ahead of my story, for I have not told you of his present circumstances.

Roland had forsworn the stage, and had cut himself off absolutely from his

former life. In this, as in everything else, he was an extremist. People were always deceived by his quietness. That composed face and indifferent manner concealed a capacity for white-hot passion.

As a matter of fact, I suppose, really passionate people are always like this, or they couldn't live with themselves; but we are blind to it. Roland had the spirit of a fanatic. He was always torturing himself one way or another. You couldn't help being fond of him, for he was so noble—and so silly!

Now, if you please, he had sold everything he possessed, and with the proceeds had pensioned off his old servant with an annuity. The mysterious legacy which had counted so heavily against him he had turned over to me, with instructions to use it in bringing the thieves of Irma's pearls to justice. I couldn't very well refuse the money without confessing that Walter Dunsany was backing me; and no one in the world, not even Sadie, was to know of the relations between Mr. Dunsany and myself. Besides, if I hadn't taken it, he would have done something still more foolish with it; so I was holding it in trust.

Having divested himself literally of every cent, Roland set about finding a job. Among his old acquaintances there were several prominent men who would have been glad to put him in the way of a good berth, but, of course, he would not apply to them. I could have done something for him myself, but he would not let me. He wanted to stand on his own feet, he said. He went about answering advertisements and visiting employment-bureaus like any green lad from the country.

With his romantic good looks, he could not be insignificant in any sphere, however humble. He had some quaint and trying experiences. He served as a demonstrator for a while, and another time as a model for an art-class. Roland used to say at this time that he hated his good looks, and I really think he meant it.

He finally landed a job as assistant bookkeeper and invoice clerk with a coffee-importing firm on Water Street. How he hypnotized them into believing that he could keep books I can't say. His salary was twelve dollars a week, and he lived within it, which you will grant was something of a change for the late darling of the *matinées*. He had a hall bedroom on East Seventeenth Street, and ate outside. In the evenings he boned shorthand. His idea was to become, first, an expert law stenographer, and finally to study law.

I found him in his wretched little room, as usual, bending over the shorthand manual with a green shade over his eyes. I was his only visitor in these days. He was thinner than of yore, not so harassed, perhaps, but grimmer. There were deep, hawklike lines from his proud nose to the corners of his bitter lips. It made me savage to see him wasting his splendid youth in this fashion.

"I've just had dinner with Irma," I told him.

"Yes?" he said calmly.

You never could get any change out of Roland. Whatever he felt, he never dropped his mask.

"Mount was there."

"Charming fellow, Mount!"

"Do you like him?" I asked. I could not tell whether he spoke sincerely or in sarcasm.

"I neither like him nor dislike him," he replied evenly. "He's a charming fellow, isn't he?"

"Oh, that's the tag they put on him," I said impatiently.

He returned his attention to the shorthand book. This unnatural pretense of indifference exasperated me.

"I believe they're preparing to get married," I said brutally.

"We expected that, didn't we?"

"Don't you *care*?"

"Not overmuch."

I knew he lied!

"Why do you put on this pretense with me?" I demanded. "If you were really

as callous and unfeeling as you make out, I wouldn't bother with you."

He merely smiled. I was determined to rouse him.

"She doesn't love him," I said.

"He's rich," Quarles returned with a sneer.

All the time I was trying to goad him, I was getting more worked up myself.

"That's not it!" I answered angrily.

"Nobody knows it better than you. She's sound to the core. It's only your black temper that sees evil in her!"

"Then how do you explain Mount?" he asked.

"That's her instinct," I said. "It would be any good woman's instinct. She's trying to persuade herself that she loves Mount, to fill the horrible emptiness of her heart since you failed her."

"I failed her?" he said, with his eyebrows making two peaks.

"Precisely. You have no right to allow her to go on thinking that you are guilty."

"I don't care to go into that again," he declared, with his immovable stubbornness.

"If there is a catastrophe, it will be your fault!" I cried.

"Really, as I've told you often, you've missed your vocation, Ben," he said with his bitter smile. "You're so romantic! Let's change the subject."

"I won't!" I cried. "I'm glad I'm romantic, if that's what it is. I love her a sight better than you ever did, because I have no hopes there myself. I am thinking of her. You think of nothing but yourself and your childish pride!"

"Bravo, Ben!" he said mockingly.

"I can't stand aside and see her marry Mount. He's too old. There's an evil spot in him somewhere, though I can't put my finger on it."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" he inquired.

"I came to you to get you to let me off my promise to say nothing."

That roused him as nothing else could. He sprang up, his face dark with passion. He actually threatened me with his fist.

"You swore to me!" he cried. "By Heaven, if you break your oath—"

"Keep your hair on," I said. "Am I not here asking you to let me off?"

"I will not let you off!" he declared. "This is my affair, and mine only."

"How about her?" I put in.

He did not hear me.

"You mean to be my friend, but friendship has no right to dictate another man's private affairs. I lead my life as I have to. You lead yours. No interference! That's the only way we can be friends. The only way you can help me in this is by bringing the thieves to book."

"But that's going to be a long chase," I groaned. "Meanwhile Mount is making hay. What's the use of publishing the truth, if the mischief is already done?"

He shrugged.

"If she can bring herself to marry Mount, well—"

The self-sufficiency of a passionate young man! I could almost have wept at my helplessness against his obstinacy.

"Be fair!" I protested. "It is our experience, our knowledge of men, that warns us against Mount. How can she tell?"

"This does no good," he muttered.

In his bitter wrong-headedness I believe he almost wished that Irma might find out her mistake too late. But I would not give up, though I felt it was useless.

"What happiness can there be for any of us, if Irma comes to grief?" I said.

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, drop it!" he cried painfully. "What's the good of tearing open these old sores? You're off on the wrong tack. I've told you often enough. What if you did tell her I was innocent, and she turned back to me? That would only be worse. I have nothing for her. I don't believe in her. She's dead to me. You can't revive that sort of thing."

"Very well, then," I said. "It would be more merciful never to tell her that you are innocent."

That touched him.

"Oh!" he returned sharply, taken

aback. "A man doesn't like to dwell under that sort of accusation!" He quickly recovered himself. "Just as you think best," he said hardily.

But let him make believe all he liked, the one little glimpse had convinced me that he was human after all!

## XXII

It was on the way home from Roland's room, in the dark and silent side streets, that I first discovered I was being trailed.

Since receiving Sadie's report of Milbourne's visit to her office, I had expected this. It troubled me little. My position as commander-in-chief kept me behind the lines, and they would not learn much by following me. My mail I got from the post-office myself, and our telephone conversations would seldom have conveyed anything to an outsider, if he did succeed in intercepting them.

At the same time, it was annoying to know oneself watched. I wondered if there was any advantage to be gained from a counter-stroke. Since they had succeeded in bringing me into the open, I had a mind to take an open shot at them. I began to lay my plans forthwith.

My shadow picked me up as I issued from my house next morning. He waited outside the restaurant where I had my breakfast, and accompanied me to the office. Looking out of my office window, I could actually see him sitting on a bench in Bryant Park, opposite.

He was a slender young man, with an unwholesome complexion and mean, sharp eyes—a "sleuth" of the cheapest type. I wondered somewhat, since they thought me worth following, that they had not chosen a better instrument.

He had a good long wait, for I sent out for sandwiches at lunch-time. At two o'clock he was relieved by another man, considerably beefier, but not a bit more intelligent looking. It apparently had not occurred to either of them to ascertain whether I was watching them.

I determined to reach back at my enemies through their own spy. Having

telephoned Sadie to have two good men meet me at the New Amsterdam Hotel at half-past five, I sallied forth. My shadow resumed his attendance at my heels in the most obvious way.

What kind of a fool did he think I was? It was child's play to shake him off. I merely went through the drug-store in the Times Building and down-stairs to the subway station. I crossed under the tracks, mixed in the crowd on the up-town platform, and ascended to the street again. I saw my gum-shoe artist no more.

I met the two men whom Sadie had sent me, gave them their instructions, and went home. My only fear now was that I might not be able to find my trailer again; but by and by, to my satisfaction, I saw the beefy one loafing on the other side of the street.

I went out and dined well, while he looked through the restaurant window. I took in a show, letting him cool his heels outside the theater, and afterward I treated myself to one of old Adam's rabbits and a mug of ale. It was near midnight when I was through with that, and the time was ripe for my little comedy. I wended my way toward the office with Gumshoes hard on my trail.

The little building where I have my office is given over entirely to business, and is closed for the night at ten o'clock. Like the other tenants, I have to carry a latch-key in case I wish to get in after

hours. I am often there late, but I have never met any of the other tenants at night.

It all went through as on roller-bearings. I walked down Fortieth Street, softly whistling "Mighty Lak' a Rose," which was my signal to the two men. They were posted in the shadow of the last doorway I had to pass before turning into my own. The block is a quiet one at that hour.

I let myself into my building and waited just inside the door. When Gumshoes came along, all unsuspecting, my two friends jumped him, and, holding his mouth, hustled him in after me, before he well knew what had struck him. We improvised a gag out of a handkerchief, and carried him up-stairs to my office. The fellow did not even kick.

We dumped him in a chair and turned on the lights. Then we stood off, and the three of us burst out laughing simultaneously. You never saw a more comical sight than the expression of that poor bloodhound who suddenly found himself treed by his quarry!

I now had no further use for the two men, so I tipped them, and they left us. I locked the door after them and put the key in my pocket. Telling my prisoner that he might unfasten his gag, I sat down at my desk facing him. On the desk I prominently displayed a rather wicked-looking automatic. I had no idea of using it, but it made a potent argument.

*(To be continued in the November number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE)*

### THE MASTER'S TOUCH

ACROSS those mellow strings he drew his bow,  
And all the rhapsodies of spring were heard—  
The woodland's wakening, clear stream's rhythmic flow,  
And call of mating bird.

Then, when applause was done, and all was hushed,  
Once more he stood before the listening throng  
And played, while hosts of memories o'er me rushed,  
An old, familiar song.

I know not where you fare through weal or wo—  
You that so long since passed from out my ken;  
Yet, called from silence by the master's bow,  
I heard you sing again!

*Bell Rumford*



# THE STAGE

by Matthew  
White, Jr.



KATHLEEN CLIFFORD, WHO HAS A LEADING PART IN THE NEW FARCE, "A PAIR OF QUEENS"

*From a photograph by Maffett, Chicago*

SINGULARLY ill-timed was W. D. Howells's lament over the threatened peril to the drama in his introduction to a review of some books about the stage for the June *Harper's*. Referring to the encroachment of the movies, Mr. Howells declared that "this may be the fatal hour of the written drama's return to the primordial mime as it was before the passions spoke."

Even as the presses in Franklin Square were throwing off this dirge over the acted play, the newspapers of Gotham were telling their readers that for the first time in a good many years the Metropolitan playhouses were closing a highly successful season. Nor was this all. As the theaters where one may listen as well as look

began to bask in smiling prosperity, the clouds gathered over screenland.

Not even Victor Herbert's music could save "The Fall of a Nation" from the fate deserved by the utter banality of the thing—little more than a month's stay at the Liberty, where "The Birth of a Nation" reigned triumphant for almost an entire year, nor did the charms of a Billie Burke avail to keep going for more than half its allotted span the special showing of the serial, "Gloria's Romance," at the Globe. Happily one may keep up with this latter film in the various motion-picture houses throughout the country, or at the neighborhood theaters in New York; but the collapse in mid-career of its first exclusive release is a very sizable



BLANCHE RING, STARRING AND SINGING IN A NEW COMEDY BY WILLARD MACK, "BROADWAY AND BUTTERMILK"

*From her latest photograph by Matzene. Chicago*

straw showing the direction in which the movie winds are blowing.

The screen folk have nobody but them-

good effect. But what has been done with them? The money came in so fast and easily at first that the men who made it



MARY RYAN, LEADING WOMAN FOR A SECOND SEASON IN "THE HOUSE OF GLASS"

*From a photograph—copyrighted by Ira L. Hill, New York*

selves to thank for this gloomy outlook. In and of itself the art of the motion-picture is wonderful, abounding in opportunities capable of infinite utilization to

seemed unable to see anything else. It dazed them.

"Look you," they told themselves, "here is a public that is crazy to watch



MARTHA HEDMAN, LEADING WOMAN FOR A SECOND SEASON IN THE BIG COMEDY HIT, "THE BOOMERANG"

*From her latest photograph—copyrighted by Ira L. Hill, New York*

pictures move. It's up to us to keep 'em moving, no matter what else they do!"

Hence the invention of the five-reel feature film and the inauguration of the hat-and-coat brigade. To explain—did you ever count how many times the screen displays men taking off or putting on their hats and coats? Just because it's easier to show a hallway in a picture than in a play, there is no reason why thousands of feet of film and oceans of the patrons' time should be wasted in the hat-tree area. It's padding, pure and simple, and the public, instead of falling for it, is beginning to tumble to it. Similarly, people are so tired of the persistent lighting and smoking of cigars and cigarettes that one of the picture concerns—the Selig, I think—has at last put a permanent ban on the fumes.

Another factor making for the undoing of the movies has been the undue eagerness of the concerns engaged in their manufacture to get high-priced stars away from the other fellow. The keen competition for big names has led them to pay utterly unreasonable salaries to their actors. Naturally, they have





LOLA FISHER, LAST SPRING IN THE  
AUGUSTUS THOMAS PLAY,  
"RIO GRANDE"

NEXT TO BE LEADING WOMAN IN  
THE NEW PIECE "KING,  
QUEEN, JACK"

correspondingly scrimped on the scenario end, realizing that they had all the literature of the past to draw upon. Now that the older material has been pretty well used up, they are bestirring themselves

with prize offers in the effort to lure capable playwrights to their aid; but with small success, for authors have received such scant attention from the film folk in the past that they have not been en-



MARGUERITE CLARK, OF THE FAMOUS PLAYERS FILM COMPANY, WHO IS AMONG THE MOST SUCCESSFUL OF THOSE WHO HAVE STEPPED FROM THE SPEAKING STAGE TO THE SCREEN

couraged to cultivate relations with the screen magnates.

When the motion-picture people offer one thousand dollars a story, they imagine they are very liberal, because in length the scripts are very much shorter than three-act plays. For this very reason, picture scenarios are much more difficult to write. You see, the inability to have your characters explain themselves in speech as the action moves along is a serious handicap.

It seems a miracle, when you look at the thing in the abstract, that the public has been so eager to patronize the movies. Reverse the drawback, and imagine what the drama of the stage would be were it possible to hear the characters only, not to see them, except for brief glimpses every ten minutes or so. Pantomime has never been popular with the masses, and the screen play practically amounts to pantomime. The novelty of seeing figures in photographs move was the secret of the marvelous success of the films, but novelty dies by what it feeds on. Oliver Morosco, who is a maker of motion-pictures as well as a producer of plays, recently declared that the screen drama was dying hard, but was dying just the same.

Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean, neither does Mr. Morosco, that in a short time there will be no more film plays. There will not be so many poor ones, as the public has shown that it will not stand for them. Haven't you seen the people rise up *en masse* and walk out of the movie houses when the announcement of the average two-reel comedy was flashed on the screen? The trend to the five-reel feature pictures has caused a neglect of the so-called "filler" branch of the business, so that this portion of an evening's program has gone from bad to worse.



MILDRED HARRIS, IN PICTURES WITH THE TRIANGLE FILM CORPORATION

From a photograph—copyrighted by Hartsook, San Francisco



GAIL KANE, WHO WAS LEADING WOMAN IN "THE MIRACLE MAN," NOW IN PICTURES WITH THE WORLD FILM CORPORATION

*From a photograph by the Campbell Studio, Chicago*



And the five-reeler, by the same token, has ceased to be the drawing card it once was.

"Why do they make the films so long?" said a patron of the movies to me the other day.

I answered that because material was scarce they had to make the most of a single idea. This and the technical requirements of the film-strip itself are among the causes that have brought about the beginning of the end.

"How did you enjoy your one incursion into the movies?" I asked Blanche Ring.

I had dropped in to interview her during a rehearsal of "Broadway and Buttermilk."

"I didn't," she answered in her refreshingly frank fashion. "Of course, I was doing a play I had already acted in—'The Wall Street Girl'—so this may partly have accounted for the confined, cramped feeling that seemed all the time to possess me."

"You're in the line-up with Jane Cowl," I said, "with whom it was once in the pictures and then never again."

"But I can't see why she should object," Miss Ring hastened to retort. "She's a pretty woman, and screen work should have some compensations for her. Besides, I'm such a dyed-in-the-wool Thespian that I suppose it's hard for me to accustom myself to such innovations in stage traditions as the film imposes."

For many years

Blanche Ring's grandfather was leading comedian at the old Boston Museum; both her sisters, Frances and Julie,



JULIETTE DAY, WHO HAS AN INGÉNUE PART IN THE NEW PLAY BY THE HATTONS, "UP-STAIRS AND DOWN"

*From a photograph by McClure, New York*



FLORE RAVELLES, OF THE DIAGHILEFF RUSSIAN BALLET, AS SHE APPEARS  
IN "SCHEHERAZADE"

From a photograph by White, New York

are on the boards, and she herself first trod them at the Hub, her native city, when a mere child. It was her singing of "The Good Old Summer-Time" in "The Defender," a hot-weather show of 1902, that first caused Broadway to pick her out of the "also rans" in the cast.

"I can't recall any one, Miss Ring," I told her, "who has made so many distinct song hits as you have. There are 'Yip-i-addy,' 'I've Got Rings on My Fingers,' and—"

"Oh, please," and Miss Ring raised a protesting hand, "I'm afraid to think of them!"

"But why?" I naturally inquired.

"Because I'm wondering if I shall ever be able to put over another. You know I have tried to get away from song shows. I suppose I'm ambitious, like all the rest. Though I don't exactly aspire to play *Lady Macbeth*, I always wanted to get a little nearer the legitimate than musical comedy lands you. So when Willard Mack handed me 'Jane O'Day from Broadway,' as the piece was originally called when we did it in Chicago, I was delighted, for there wasn't a song in it.

"But—well, you know how it is when the public gets accustomed to looking for a certain kind of thing from an actress. The management declared that the audiences wanted me to sing, and would like the play a whole lot better if I did. Both Mr. Mack and I protested, but you can guess what sort of chance art—ahem!—stands when it tries to buck up against business. Hence my regrets and this buttermilk"; and she took another drink from the glass standing on her dressing-table, which, by the bye, Charles

Winner, her husband, bade me make sure she finished.

Mr. Winner, you may or may not remember, is the actor who was with Blanche Ring in "The Wall Street Girl" and "When Claudia Smiles." The hit he made in the Ditrichstein "Great Lover" impersonation in "The Cohan Revue" will keep him on the road and away from his wife for at least another season.

"And now about your supply of songs, Miss Ring," I resumed. "I dare say you get hundreds."

"Thousands!" she replied. "And the worst of it is the senders imagine that their particular piece is the only one I receive. At any rate, they write in after a week or so and request me to return their manuscript forthwith. Meanwhile, of course, hundreds of others have come in, and that one is buried out of sight beneath the mass."

"You ought to have some such system of entry and filing as we employ in magazine offices," I ventured to suggest.

"Now, Mr. White," the star laughed, "imagine any actress with any system whatever! The Lord knows I only wish it were possible for us to live more like other people. I get fearfully weary of this helter-skelter existence. You see, in our uncertain calling, we never know what's going to happen. For instance, if this play that I'm rehearsing scores a big hit, we shall stay in New York till Christmas at least. If it doesn't, we shall have to move out very soon. Now I ask you, how can any one make plans under conditions like that?"



LUBOV TCHERNICHOWA, OF THE DIAGHILEFF RUSSIAN BALLET, IN A BAKST COSTUME FOR "PETROUCHKA," RUSSIAN FOLK DANCE

*From a photograph by White, New York*



MARGARET GREENE AND LOUISE DRESSER IN A SCENE FROM THE THIRD ACT OF THE  
NEW FARCE, "COAT-TALES"

*From a photograph by White, New York*

"And, of course, you know this is the sort of thing that obtains all along the theatrical line. Is it any wonder we're almost prostrated with nervousness on opening nights? I shall be especially relieved when this one is over. My last two New York *premières* have been punctuated with untoward happenings that had nothing whatever to do with the merits or faults of the piece. 'The Wall Street Girl' was first seen on Broadway the night

after the Titanic went down. 'When Claudia Smiles' came in when a fearful blizzard was doing its best to make the Great White Way live up to its name in an impassable fashion."

You will know when you read this whether Miss Ring won or lost on "Broadway and Buttermilk," which certainly has all that a favorite star and a capital support could do to help out a piece. In the cast are W. P. Carlton, who





FRANCES STARR, STARRING UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF DAVID BELASCO IN THE NEW PLAY,  
"LITTLE LADY IN BLUE"

*From her latest photograph by Sarony, New York*

sang "The Belle of New York" with Edna May in London; Helen Lowell, a power in "The Red Petticoat"; and Calvin Thomas, the much-sought-after leading juvenile seen here last spring with Augustus Thomas's "Rio Grande."

Thinking over what Miss Ring had said about the uncertainties of the show business, I reflected that

there is yet another aspect of the thing. For instance, a failure for the play does not invariably mean irretrievable loss on it for the playwright.

A notable instance is "A Rich Man's Son," by James Forbes, produced in New York some four years ago as the first serious play written by its author, whose "Chorus Lady," "The



CARROLL MCCOMAS, LEADING WOMAN IN THE NEW COMEDY BY ROI COOPER MEGRUE, "SEVEN CHANCES"

*From a photograph by White, New York*



ALICE BRADY, OF THE WORLD FILM CORPORATION, WHO IS SO POPULAR IN THE MOVIES THAT SHE KEEPS POSTPONING HER RETURN TO THE LEGITIMATE

*From her latest photograph by White, New York*

Traveling Salesman," and "The Commuters" had kept numberless audiences laughing. Broadway would have none of "A Rich Man's Son," and speedily forgot that there had ever been such a drama. But Mr. Forbes still had faith in his brain-child, which doubtless is his favorite among them all, just as mothers usually

love best the afflicted among their offspring. He interested May Robson in the piece, with a view to taking the part of the rich boy's mother, and changed its name to "The Making Over of Mrs. Matt," with the result that in July the play finished a tour of forty weeks, and may be tried on Manhattan again.



VIOLET HEMING, LAST SEASON IN "UNDER FIRE," AND NOW TO BE LEADING WOMAN IN  
RICHARD WALTON TULLY'S NEW PLAY, "THE FLAME"

*From her latest photograph—copyrighted by Ira L. Hill, New York*

Contrariwise, "Treasure Island," to which New York opened its heart so wide last winter, found Chicago indifferent.

And here's another odd thing about the theatrical game. I've noticed that in numerous cases it seems easier for an author to follow a failure with another fiasco than for a playwright who has achieved success to get a production at all. I know of one young man who had six "flivvers" brought out in rapid succession in New York and London; and yet managers always seem eager for his work. On the other hand, men like Augustin McHugh, with the hit of "Officer 666" back of him, Carlyle Moore with "Stop Thief" to his credit, Elmer Reizenstein, author of "On Trial," and Alice Bradley, who wrote "The Governor's Lady," have remained for years on the waiting list.

To be sure, McHugh at last gathered the coin to produce on his own account, with disastrous results, while last autumn he again came a cropper with "Search Me." Carlyle Moore, too, last summer had a tryout, in Boston, of his "Scapegoat," which is reported to have made but small impression, even with Edmund Breese to help out.

#### THE NEW PLAYS

The dramatic season of 1916-1917 opened in New York on what proved to be the hottest night of the summer—July 31. By odd chance—or could it have been managerial premeditation?—the action of the play revolved about a fur coat, thereby furnishing the reviewers with an easy target for their wit. "Coat-Tales" was the name of the farce—for of course it was a farce. Whoever heard of the Broadway season starting with anything else? Last year's opener, you may remember, was "The Last Laugh."

The author of "Coat-Tales" is a writer new to the programs, one Edward Clark. The Cort Theater was the place, and Arthur Hammerstein the manager, with Louise Dresser and Tom Wise as two leaders in the proceedings.

For the first half of the evening I was

frankly bored, even though I was fortunate enough to catch the thing on its second night, by which time the weather had cooled off. It took Mr. Clark an act and a half to get things going, and as there are only three acts in all, you can easily gage the proportion of wasted moments in the piece. Hence it is not to be wondered at that it lasted but three weeks.

The second offering of the Manhattan stage year was "Seven Chances," a comedy by Roi Cooper Megrue, based on a short story, "The Cradle Snatcher," by Gouverneur Morris. David Belasco, no less, stood godfather to the thing, which plays up to the *n*th degree that old, old idea of a man being obliged to marry within a given time or else face the loss of a fortune.

Padding which outwads that of the average five-reeler at the movies, lengthens out what would make a good vaudeville sketch to an affair of the whole evening. Nevertheless, with such clever men as Frank Craven and Otto Kruger to take charge of the proceedings, one feels very much inclined to forgive both Mr. Belasco and Mr. Megrue.

As *Jimmie*, the hero, proposes seven times, there are seven pretty girls in the cast; and the second act, involving a dinner-party on ladies' day at a club, insures a display of the last cry in feminine frills and furbelows. This last is an asset to a modern production, for if clothes don't make the man, the sight of them certainly pleases the women, and once get the women clamoring to be taken to a certain play, that play is made.

The first hit of the young season was achieved with the third production—"Cheating Cheaters," a farcical melodrama by Max Marcin, author of "The House of Glass." Here is a play all about crime, the plot of which it would be a crime to give away. Suffice to say that after witnessing it, you would find it difficult to take seriously "Kick In," or others of that ilk, wherein crooks confide their fears and hopes to the audience.

In "Cheating Cheaters" you are taken



into the confidence of a couple of gangs—there is scarcely an honest man or woman among the whole thirteen persons composing the cast—but by this very device you are also let into the know about a state of things which taps the laughter-springs irresistibly.

Manager Woods provides a corking cast. There is that excellent actress out of the West, Marjorie Rambeau, who reminds us in voice of Ethel Barrymore, and who was introduced to Broadway the season before last in "So Much for So Much"; also Cyril Keightley, who was in "The Song of Songs." Then there's William Morris, the first leading man at the Empire in "The Girl I Left Behind Me," and more recently in the two Belasco productions "Is Matrimony a Failure?" and "The Concert." Nor should I forget Anne Sutherland, who does a part somewhat akin to her famous *Kate Fallon* in "The Deep Purple," or Robert McWade, noted for his work in "The Country Boy," and last seen in "Rio Grande."

Crime likewise bulked big in the first serious play of the August offerings—one that looks like a stayer. H. H. Frazee, after declaring that he meant to stick to farces, forswore his determination in order to produce a drama by Otto Hauerbach, hitherto known to program-readers for the librettos to such light affairs as "High Jinks" and "Katinka." Frankly, I admit that I expected the worst. One almost invariably gets it when your bread-and-butter playwright is bitten by the bug of ambition; but "The Silent Witness" agreeably disappointed me.

It's old-fashioned in theme, to be sure; but love and marriage are old-fashioned, and I have not heard any one suggesting that they should be abolished because of that fact. Somehow Mr. Hauerbach has managed to make his story so absorbing that we forget the conventional lines along which it runs.

And the cast helps amazingly. Emelie Polini, for two seasons leading woman at the Princess while it was given up to

thrillers, brings keen intelligence to a part that requires her to skate over eighteen years in the interval between the prologue and the first act. Paul Everton is convincingly sincere as an assistant district attorney, and in minor rôles, two strangers to me, Mrs. Jacques Martin and David Higgins, are capital.

But why doesn't some friend take Henry Kolker aside and speak to him about his hats? In the Billie Burke film, "Gloria's Romance," he wears a derby that pulls a laugh every time he appears in it, although his rôle is the most serious one in the picture. In "The Silent Witness" he again manages to divert interest by his second-act head-piece. I suppose he would be considered the hero of the play, but the chap who runs away with most of the honors is young Donald Gallaher as *Bud Morgan*, the youth accused of murder.

It is not so long since Gallaher was the best player of boys' parts on the Frohman list. Such precocious youths don't always develop as they grow older. Donald does.

Why can't her managers allow Ann Murdock to be the natural, ladylike girl she is in reality? Why do they condemn her to hoydenish parts? To make a bad matter worse, they have saddled her with the most inept English comedy that has crossed the Atlantic since we had "The Brass Bottle" wished on us. That also was a hit in London, as was "Please Help Emily," a ghastly affair by H. M. Harwood, whose shortcomings were only partially atoned for by the good work of Charles Cherry, Ferdinand Gottschalk, and John Harwood as a gentleman's servant.

There is a dreadful American in the first act, who says to *Emily*:

"Are you fixed up?"

This is supposed to be United States for "Are you engaged?" and is dilated on at great length as a sample of American slang. But then, what can one expect from English playwrights writing about this country, when their idea of a typical

American name for a man is Cyrus? One would think that H. M. Harwood was a Pinero or a Bernard Shaw in refusing to allow his work to be tampered with. Otherwise, why didn't some stage director "fix up" his Yankee idiom?

The things that threatened Blanche Ring's New York *première* this year were so appalling—including terrific heat and an impending car-strike—that her management wisely postponed her opening for a week. When it finally opened, "Broadway and Buttermilk" revealed itself as decidedly worth waiting for. It may be described as a "Way Down East" anticipation with a Great White Way fulfilment.

In short, in "Broadway and Buttermilk" Willard Mack does for the rural drama what Max Marcin, in "Cheating Cheaters," does for the crime play. It's the best vehicle Miss Ring has had, her songs fit in admirably, and Helen Lowell's work as a country boarding-house keeper, nervous about her pretty daughter's future, is a little classic in its line.

The twist in the plot brought out so neatly in the last act by Calvin Thomas puts the cap-sheaf of novelty to a pleasant evening, just as Miss Ring's tag about who are the "boobs" sends you home with a lump in your throat.

In "His Bridal Night" the audience not only sees the dancing Dolly Sisters transformed into actresses, but witnesses the spectacle of the lion and the lamb lying down together, in the persons of Lawrence Rising and Margaret Mayo, who appear as joint authors of the piece. Two years ago these two were at swords' points over Mr. Rising's alleged appropriation of material from "Twin Beds" for his "Apartment 12-K," the farce with which the season of 1914-1915 opened. "Apartment 12-K" proved a swift failure, while "Twin Beds," brought out a few nights later, was, as you know, an enduring success.

It looks as if "His Bridal Night" would also do well, even though the idea

of the mixed identity of twins is so old that scarcely any magazine would accept a story based upon it. But with players like John Westley, Pedro de Cordoba, Lucile Watson, and Harry Lillford, to say nothing of the marvelous mutual resemblance of Rozsika and Yancsi Dolly, and the two dances they throw in, it is small wonder that the Republic Theater is crowded.

In spite of the title, the situations are not really *risqué*. Bad taste in this direction is confined to a few remarks of the bridegroom and the butler, which could easily be omitted. I want to add a word for the beauty of the scenery, a feature of farce frequently neglected. All three sets, executed by Joseph Physioc, are marvels of harmonious colors and suitability.

The second knockout hit of the new theatrical year was registered by "Turn to the Right," a nondescript piece by Winchell Smith and John E. Hazzard. It has the fairy-tale qualities of Mr. Smith's initial success, "The Fortune Hunter," and it looks as if the public would like it equally well.

The new producers—Mr. Smith himself and John L. Golden—have picked a corking cast. Forrest Winant, as the young hero just out from a year at Sing Sing, William E. Meehan, as a pal he met there, and Ruth Chester, as the boy's mother, particularly distinguish themselves. Peach jam is a big factor in giving the play a happy ending, and Louise Rutter is certainly some peach of a heroine.

The version of François Coppée's "The Guilty Man," prepared by Ruth Helen Davis and the late Charles Klein, is notable for the excellent cast with which Manager Woods has provided it. Irene Fenwick infuses real individuality into a part that could easily be made cut and dried. Lowell Sherman, too, does all he can to lift a conventional villain into something more than a mere type. But I doubt if there is much of a public nowadays for a French drama of this sort, no matter how well acted it may be.

# Light Verse

## AN EXCHANGE OF COMPLIMENTS

THE West, the West, the woolly West, where natives roam in feathers dressed; where Injuns steal the settler's kids, and roast them on their kettle-lids; where cowboys gallop into town and shoot a score of people down; where ruffians swagger down the street and knife policemen on their beat!

Such are the tales I hear, at least, when I am traveling in the East.

The East, the East, the poky East, the dear old, queer old "late deceased"; the place where dry old stiffies are found, and stale old maids in flocks abound; the place where tenderfeet are bred, and fogies, less alive than dead; where callow youths, devoid of brains, saunter around and suck their canes!

Such are the views I hear expressed when I am traveling in the West!

*J. Edward Tuft*

## WHEN MOLLY COOKS

WHEN Molly to the kitchen hies—

A rare event, you may surmise—

A frilly apron must she wear,

A cap of lace atop her hair.

She's very careful of her looks,

When Molly cooks!

The kitchen things must be just so,

The spices neatly in a row,

The flour all sifted, coffee ground,

Utensils where they can be found;

Of course, the necessary books

When Molly cooks.

And yet, the greatest care despite,

Things never are exactly right.

There's always something not laid out;

So Molly madly skips about

And finds it "in the strangest nooks,"

When Molly cooks.

The recipes are never clear—

She thinks they sound "so very queer"!

She wrinkles up her pretty brow,

While audibly she wonders how,

And yet no interference brooks,

When Molly cooks.

Then, when it's done, she takes her chair  
With that "you should feel honored" air;  
And you must flatter, though you want  
Just one thing more—a restaurant;  
But one must eat and smile, gadzooks,  
When Molly cooks!

*Louis B. Capron*

## ON THE LINE

A RAINBOW shimmered in the sun

Before my dazzled eyes,

A combination glorious

Of countless brilliant dyes;

Bright greens and deepest violets,

And vivid reds and blues,

Most gorgeous yellows, palest pinks,

And glowing crimson hues.

"How beautiful are nature's rare

Prismatic tints!" said I.

Just then a puff of autumn breeze

Came boldly roving by,

And showed me, as it flitted past,

That pageantry divine

Was but my neighbor's hose, hung out

To dry upon the line!

*Minna Irving*

## INSIDE

GET this, my brothers, and get it straight—

It's a mighty good thing to know—

A guy may always be up to date

In the clothes that he's got to show,

A regular dude in the way he's dressed,

Yet a man of a first-rate mold;

For under many a full-dress vest

Is beating a heart of gold!

Tain't always the chap in the flannel shirt

That's all that he'd ought to be;

Sometimes he's nothing but common dirt

And a bum of a low degree.

Broadcloth's honest at times, I've found,

And frequently rags are not,

As you'll learn, no doubt, if you bang around

And study the world a lot.

So size your man by his ways and speech

And the fashion he does his work;

For many a man with a six-foot reach  
Has the soul of a ribbon clerk;  
And many a rough-clad guy's a pest  
And a sneak and a crook, all told;  
While often under a full-dress vest  
Is beating a heart of gold!

*Berton Braley*

AMONG HIS OWN PEOPLE

A PROPHET is honorless, so we are told,  
In the places where prophets are bred.  
There's fact in this threadbare tradition of old,  
Yet much of the truth is unsaid.

The I-knew-him-whens in the place where one  
grew  
Are slower, perchance, to discern  
The greatness of one whom they earlier knew,  
Ere life took its fortunate turn.

But wait! The world has grown tired of the  
man  
It worshiped as hero a while!  
He may turn to the place where his sojourn  
began,  
Assured of a welcoming smile.

His welcome will not be conditioned upon  
His doing great things—not at all!  
They'll treat him the same as before he had gone  
To answer the fickle world's call.

They knew Johnny Brown as "old Billy  
Brown's boy"—

The world knows John Brown on a throne;  
They'll know, when the world has discarded its  
toy,

The same Johnny Brown they had known.

They'll know him and love him for things that  
the rest

Had never discovered at all;  
The faithful old friends at the last are the best,  
When a man has his back to the wall!

*Strickland Gillilan*

A TALE OF WO AND WOOL

ONCE Mary's little lamb and a Lilliputian  
llama  
Star participants became in a disputatious  
drama.  
Soon snowy wool flew thick and fast; they  
fought in grim despair.  
Discordant, wailing bleats disturbed the circum-  
ambient air—

The bitter lamentations of the llama and  
the lamb.

And everywhere the llama went the lamb was  
sure to go,

Although the llama's onslaughts caused a fearful  
vertigo.

Raged the conflict still more fiercely, as the sac-  
rilegious lamb

Lunged like a lump of lead against the llama's  
diaphragm—

Lamentable proceedings of the llama and  
the lamb!

But still they lingered near about, till fleeces  
white as snow

Were enshrouded and enveloped in a sanguinary  
flow;

Then at last the battle ended, and Mary did  
appear,

Lay in death two woolly warriors—a pathetic  
souvenir—

The late lamented llama and the lamentable  
lamb.

AFTERMATH

Since writing of these warriors who destroyed  
each others fleeces,  
Sapphira's fate alarms me, and my peace of  
mind decreases.

Lest censor's perspicacity demand investigation,  
Confession I am forced to make in utter  
desperation—

There wasn't any llama, and  
there wasn't any lamb!  
*Mabel Martin*

THE PENALTY OF BEING HONEST

JOSEPHUS JUDKINS is a man  
Who wears the debtor's crown;  
Until last week he was in debt  
To all the stores in town.

But last week, by some curious fate,  
He called on Silas Strode,  
The Main Street groceryman, and paid  
Him every cent he owed.

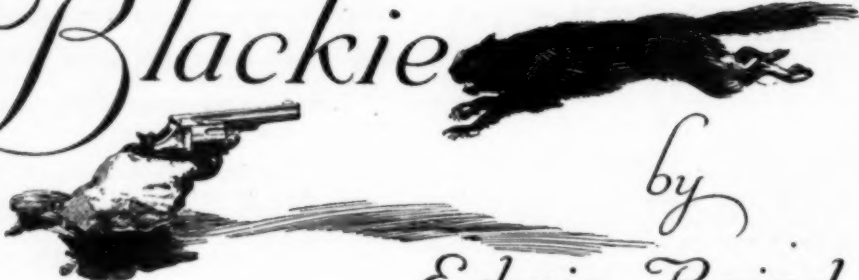
Strode looked at Judkins in amaze,  
Then at the cash he'd got,  
And with a gurgle and a gasp  
He dropped dead on the spot.

The friends of Silas, thereupon,  
Without a single thought  
That Judkins had at last become  
As honest as he ought

To be always, arose in wrath  
And were not satisfied  
Until they had him taken up  
And charged with homicide!

*W. J. Lampton*

# Blackie



by  
Edwin Baird

GALLOWAY COBB, of Springdale, sat at his kitchen table, breakfasting on pork-chops and corn-meal muffins, and reading, between bites, the *Springdale Courant* aloud to Sarah Cobb, his wife.

"It's an outrage!" he interjected wrathfully. "It oughta be stopped!"

"What oughta be stopped?" inquired Mrs. Cobb, refilling his coffee-cup.

Cobb leveled a stubby finger at an item in the *Courant*.

"It says here," he continued thickly, talking and eating at the same time, "the police are drivin' the crooks from the city, and Springdale's gettin' the benefit. One hold-up man was taken to the calaboose last night, and two 'spicious characters were told to leave town. Others are thought to be headed this way. A fine howdy-do, I must say! Why don't the city keep its crooks? Why don't—"

Mr. Cobb paused abruptly, his cup midway to his lips, his gaze riveted on Blackie Toodles, who, questing edibles, had leaped to the table in her noiseless way and now stood, with arched back and elevated tail, surveying his plate longingly. Cobb returned his cup to the saucer and looked at his wife, who stood at the stove, a fork in her hand, her attention devoted to a pan of sizzling pork-chops.

"Since when," he asked, obviously struggling for a cool politeness, "must I eat my meals with that infernal cat?"

Mrs. Cobb lifted her patient eyes from the meat.

"Blackie, get down this moment!"

No such gentleness characterized Cobb when he addressed the cat.

"Scat, you beast!" he bellowed, and flourished his napkin threateningly.

Blackie retreated to the edge of the table. Her back shot suddenly higher, every hair standing on end. Her green eyes glared at the enemy with owlsh, un-winking defiance. Then, baring her teeth and emitting a hiss of hatred, she sprang softly to the floor and scurried under the sink, where she again directed her staring green eyes to the man she feared and hated.

Mr. Cobb buttered a hot muffin, and his roly-poly face reddened somewhat as he vigorously resumed:

"You gotta get rid of that worthless beast! If you don't, I will! What good is it, anyway? What d'you keep it for? I tell you, Sarah, I won't stand it another day—"

"It's five minutes to seven," reminded his wife, with a warning glance at the kitchen clock. "Finish your breakfast and don't talk so much."

She transferred a chop from the frying-pan to his plate. Cobb promptly attacked the delicacy with gusto; but he continued to mumble indistinct threats while his fat jaws champed in rapid mastication. The long-handled fork held at her hip, Mrs. Cobb gazed pensively at the remaining chop, which later was to form her breakfast. A scrawny, rather angular woman, with a resigned face and bony fingers de-



noting hard toil, she presented a startling contrast to her husband, who was short, thick, and self-assertive.

Mr. Cobb's ire against Blackie showed no sign of abating, and his wife's distress grew. Presently her faded blue eyes began winking. She passed the back of her thin hand across them, and it came away wet. Soon she was whimpering and sniffing.

"You're always picking on poor little Blackie, and she's the only friend I've got in this world. What pleasure would I get out of life, anyway, if it wasn't for Blackie? You'll persist in your meanness till you make us both run away from home; that's what you'll do!"

Cobb rose with a fat, energetic movement, an expression akin to shame on his moonlike face.

"There, there!" he soothed roughly, as he put his plump arm around her scraggy waist and kissed her cheek. "Don't carry on so. Where's my hat? I'll be late at the office."

And then, in another minute, he was out of the house, and his stocky legs were propelling him in the direction of the Eden Real-Estate Company's office, where it was his business to capture back-to-the-soil enthusiasts from the city and interest them in the purchase of lots and plots on the instalment plan.

## II

IN town, during the day, Galloway Cobb heard much talk concerning the influx of undesirable characters; but somehow the topic had lost its flavor for him. Of more appeal was the reflection that he had behaved rather shabbily to his wife that morning. So potent an influence did the reflection exert on him that when he started for home, late in the afternoon, he carried in his overcoat pocket a two-pound box of candy.

When he drew within sight of the house and saw that it was dark, a horrid foreboding seized him. He was too late with his propitiatory gift! Mrs. Cobb had run away and left him, just as she had threatened to do!

So ran his thought. Nor was his fear alleviated when he entered the lower hall, called her name, and got no answer.

Then he lit the living-room lamp—and discovered that he had troubled himself to no purpose. This note was pinned over the face of the mantel clock:

Calling on Mrs. Kempner. Back in a few minutes.—SARAH.

Much relieved, he placed his box of candy in the exact center of the living-room table, where Mrs. Cobb would be sure to see it the moment she returned; and then, waddling in his fat way, he proceeded toward the cloak-room, removing his overcoat *en route*.

All at once a piercing scream, dismal and heart-rending, apprised him that his foot had encountered Blackie's tail, with painful results to the luckless animal. He immediately offered an apology; but the cat fled to its box in the kitchen. He followed, struck a light, and again tried to show that he was sorry.

Blackie, however, brought to bay, crouched away from him, her ears flattened, her green eyes flashing fiercely, while menacing growls of warning rumbled in her throat.

"Nice kitty!" cooed Mr. Cobb, and stooped to pat her head.

Instantly, and with her deadly hiss, Blackie's right front paw flashed forth, every hooked nail extended—and Mr. Cobb straightened suddenly up, blood streaming from an irregular scratch on his hand.

Back came his anger of the morning, blazing twice as fiercely now. He raced to the basement, with his smarting hand to his lips, found a covered basket, and, after an exciting hunt, found Blackie. Seizing her by the scruff of her neck, he popped her into the basket, clapped the lid down, and marched forth in the direction of Springdale Creek, his mind's eye beholding fascinating pictures of Blackie sinking deep into the water with a rock tied around her neck.

But alas for the plans of men in this precarious world! The road to the creek led through an unwholesome part of town, and in a particularly cheerless neighborhood a masculine form, somewhat darker than the enveloping gloom, stepped quietly from the doorway of an abandoned building, pointed a revolver at Mr. Cobb's head, and remarked succinctly:

"H'ist yer mitts!"

Mr. Cobb dutifully elevated one mitt—the left one—his right being employed with the basket. He was conscious of no feeling for several moments. He seemed to congeal where he stood. In fact—why try to disguise it longer?—Mr. Cobb was frightened stiff.

"Whatcha got in dat basket?" demanded the rough and aggressive voice behind the gun.

With no more ado, the owner of the voice lifted the lid. He dropped it still more abruptly. Spitting as never before in her life, Blackie sprang at the intruder's face and clung there, clawing furiously. Her nails behaved as they had on Mr. Cobb's flesh, only now, instead of five of them, all twenty were doing business simultaneously.

The robber, in a frenzy, called upon Satan and invoked the locality that gentleman is said to inhabit, and fled at his ut-

most possible speed. After a distance of some twenty yards Blackie parted company with him and vanished down an alley in a black streak, her tail almost half as big as her body. The highwayman, still profane with agonized eloquence, also disappeared, no man knows where.

### III

MR. COBB's fright passed gradually, but it was a considerable space before he felt assured that all was well. Even then his knees trembled slightly as he waddled down the alley calling:

"Kitty! Kitty! Kitty!"

Ten minutes of this proved fruitless, and he started home.

Half an hour later he presented himself at the kitchen door, a small parcel in his hand. His wife was baking biscuits for supper and singing happily at the employment, too.

"Why, dear!" she exclaimed as he opened the door. "Where did you go? I found the candy, and I couldn't imagine—"

"I went to the butcher's," said Cobb, displaying his parcel, "to get this liver for the cat. Here, kitty!"

Blackie, reclining in her box near the stove, opened her bottle-green eyes at him in a wide, suspicious stare.

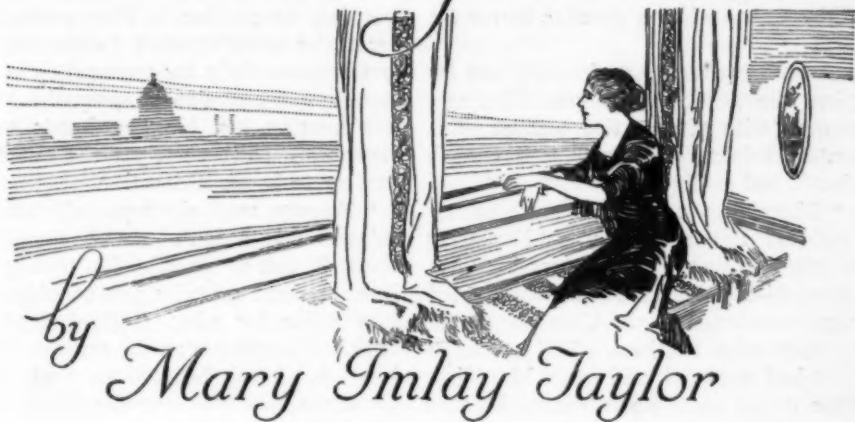
### A WOMAN

THE world has gazed on fairer,  
With gifts more sure to shine,  
But seldom on the bearer  
Of spirit half so fine.  
She wants the studied graces  
Of mask-accustomed places,  
But strength of island races  
Glow from each honest line.

To meet her open glances  
Is to be borne to sea  
With faith in true romances  
And valor's wizardry.  
She fears not night or thunder,  
Plain truth or toil or blunder;  
Gloved fingers, do you wonder  
Her clasp is alchemy?

*Richard Butler Glaenser*

# Children of Passion<sup>\*</sup>



by Mary Imlay Taylor

## XXIX

AS Hester entered, the five men at the table turned and looked at her, a little aghast. At the head sat the chairman of the committee—Senator Campman, a big man with a white mustache and a heavy, blunted nose. Next to him, on the right, was Senator Curwood, Nicholson's bitterest assailant. On the other side were two members from the northern part of the State; at the foot, a young man who was acting as chief clerk.

The room was a spacious one. The windows facing on the street had the garish effect of shades sprung to the top, in the masculine fashion. Over the mantel hung a large portrait of a former Governor, William Nicholson's predecessor.

Hester noticed all this as she came in. She saw, too, the amazement in the committeemen's faces, which changed, as they discerned her white visage, into something like panic. But she came on into the center of the room and stood there, small and slender and almost childlike.

"Gentlemen," she began in a low voice, "I have just read the newspapers, just been told of—of your attitude toward my husband. I—"

Her voice broke, and she put out a shaking hand toward the back of the nearest chair. Two of the men stumbled to their feet, confused.

"Sit down, Mrs. Nicholson, you're ill!"

It was Curwood who got to his feet first and made her take his seat. She complied mechanically, more because she could not stand up any longer than from any wish to seem at ease with them. Sitting in the Senator's big leather armchair, her figure looked still more like a slender child's.

She clutched the arms of the chair with shaking hands. Then she collected herself and began to speak as calmly as she could.

"I didn't understand—until very lately—about this business, gentlemen. I want to tell you the truth about my—about Mr. Nicholson. I read, two days ago, a long piece in the paper saying that the Governor had refused all clemency to George Barhyte, but when he found

\* Copyright, 1916, by Mary Imlay Taylor—This story began in the June number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

his brother was guilty he 'packed him off safely before he tried to save the innocent.' That was just the wording of it. I—I know it by heart!" she added with a gasp, as if the very construction of the sentence had a peculiar horror for her.

Curwood reddened again. He had inspired the article, which had filled two columns with vituperation against William Nicholson. He knew well enough what it had said.

"There isn't a word of truth in it," continued Hester proudly. "I'm going to tell you just what happened. When Leonard—my husband's half-brother, I mean—confessed to the Governor, I was up-stairs with a friend. I didn't know what had occurred, and when Mr. Nicholson didn't come up to dinner I called him. While we were at the table, the sheriff and the district attorney came in. I was curious to know what had happened, and I asked young Ashmead—the Governor's secretary. He told me, and told me, too, that Leonard was locked in the old study behind the library. There is a rear door to that room, and the key was lying in my husband's old cabinet drawer. He had forgotten that it was there. I got it."

She stopped for a moment, and a wave of color went up to her hair. The men facing her were filled with surprise and embarrassment; even the chairman kept tugging at his white mustache. After an instant she went on again.

"I was horrified at the thought that the Governor must really consign his brother to death. I thought about the question of Cain—'Am I my brother's keeper?' I never thought of the right or wrong of it, but I let him out. The motor-car was in the court, and—late as it was—I motored him over to the junction. We caught the midnight train, and Leonard went. When I got back I found that the Governor was out. It was daybreak before he came home. I told him; I know now that he must have foreseen all that has happened since, but

he didn't tell me so. Instead, he took all the blame on his own shoulders, to save me."

She stopped and drew a long breath, looking up and down the long table from one face to another. They seemed to her to be either cruel or flabby and expressionless. Only the young clerk at the foot showed any sign of sympathy. She was beating her bleeding hands on a stone wall, as it were, yet she must try and try to break it down.

"To save me," she repeated, "and it ruined him! I don't know how you feel about it, but to me it's—it's utterly unjust. I don't see why you should make him suffer for what I did behind his back. It's true—even the servants know it's true. I took Leonard away when the Governor was with the sheriff and the district attorney. I can prove it! I couldn't rest until I told you, for I knew he never would."

There was a trenchant pause. Her voice, always sweet, had dropped to its lowest key, and now it stopped in a silence that seemed to smite them all in the face. Only Campman, the coarsest-fibered man there, voiced the thought that was uppermost in all minds.

"Did you tell the Governor what you had done that night, Mrs. Nicholson?" he asked dryly.

Her color deepened painfully. Campman thought she was in love with Leonard! The inference was so clear that it could not be escaped. She read it in his eyes, and her glance, shrinking back from its discovery, divined the unspoken thought in the faces of the rest. But she had come there to defend her husband, not herself.

"I told him as soon as he came home," she answered steadily. "He didn't tell me what he was going to do. I wasn't prepared for that! I couldn't imagine that men would ruin him for that—I mean, even if he had tried to save his brother."

The shot told. Curwood writhed in his chair, looking sidewise at Campman.

Hester did not know that her words had had so much effect. She was bent on saving Nicholson; her whole passionate nature had centered itself on self-immolation.

"He should have told you," she went on fervently. "But, if he had, he would have laid the blame of Leonard's escape on me, and he knew how you would take it. I see how you take it! He's too great a man to hurt a woman like that—any woman, and I'm his wife. It was my fault, but I want to tell you, too, for his sake as well as mine, that what you think isn't true! I didn't care for Leonard. I never cared for any one but my husband. If I had, I wouldn't come here to tell you how I—I helped the— the guilty man to escape. I helped him because I didn't want the Governor to feel, all his life, that he, his brother's keeper, had betrayed his trust, had as good as murdered him. You can find out that what I say is true. The servants know; and there's a station-master at the junction—he saw me going away alone. You"—she broke down, tears running down her face—"you've ruined an innocent man! You've got to believe what I tell you!"

She bent forward in her chair, holding out her hands to them. It was Senator Curwood who answered, without looking at her.

"Good Lord, madam, we do believe you!" he said.

He blurted it out like a stone from the sling of David; he hoped it would slay that fat Goliath of unbelief, the chairman.

"I want you to tell him so, then," she went on eagerly. "I want you to make him admit that I was to blame. Don't let a foolish woman ruin him!"

She thought she could say this because she already felt so widely separated from Nicholson, so far outside of his life that she could ask things that his wife could not ask. She rose amid their confusion, and the very power of her emotion steadied her.

"I've been absolutely truthful in all I've said," she reiterated. "I want you to do him justice. Don't let him ruin himself because he has a consideration for a woman, a chivalry"—she hesitated and ended lamely—"that very few other men have."

As she spoke she turned and made her way toward the door. Curwood got to his feet, too, and went with her. His impulse was to help her, she looked so ill; but she put him aside with a gesture and went out, leaving a gaping silence behind her.

The four men looked at one another, and the chairman of the committee blew his nose.

"It's a bad mess," Campman remarked; "but what's done is done!"

Curwood struck his fist down on the table.

"No, sir, it isn't! He's got to be reinstated."

No one answered this. A kind of breathless pause ensued, and then one of the younger members leaned back in his chair.

"Good Heavens, how that woman loves him!" he exclaimed.

### XXX

It was Curwood who bore the news to Nicholson. There had been a prolonged meeting, a summoning of high officials, and the certainty, at last, that the Ex-Governor had been sacrificed. He had given up his career, even his good name, to shield his young wife. The chivalry of it touched them; it seemed to most of them as wild as *Don Quixote's* battle with the windmills, but it had a beauty and a virtue in it that penetrated even the most sordid minds.

Something must be done—something that would rehabilitate Nicholson. The time was approaching for a gubernatorial election, and, when the story crept out of the committee-room, enthusiasm prevailed. The man whom they had wronged, whom they had assailed with public vituperation, became a martyr.



It was certain that he would be renominated, and they felt it to be equally certain that when the whole story was widely known he would be reelected to the office he had resigned.

The reaction was so great that it carried Nicholson's worst enemies off their feet. Curwood was sent to tell him that the committee had found the charges against him unfounded, and had declared its full confidence in him. Strange thoughts must have occupied the Senator's mind as he made the journey from town. It is certain that he remembered the day when he had gone to the Governor with his plea for Barhyte, and had been finally refused. Curwood had been largely instrumental in the ruin that had assailed the once-honored leader, and only yesterday he had been the chief instigator of the charges against him. Yet, in half an hour, Hester had broken it all down, in half an hour she had revealed a situation so totally unexpected that he had surrendered.

He looked out curiously at the high gateway and the long row of hemlocks as his motor-car turned into the driveway and approached the old house. It was supremely quiet and forsaken. It showed abruptly the aspect of the change from power to privacy, from public place to partial disgrace.

No one was here, not even a messenger-boy. The Senator got out alone, and, ascending the wide stone steps, waited a long while at the door before a drowsy footman opened it.

Nicholson was alone in his library when Curwood came in, and for a moment the two men faced each other with a flare of their old political and personal enmity. Then the Senator saw the change in his adversary, the dignity and conscious power of suffering, and involuntarily averted his eyes.

"I've come," he began in a low voice, "to withdraw the charges made against you, and to express to you the confidence of the committee. Your wife has vindicated you."

Nicholson, completely taken aback, sank into the nearest chair and stared blankly at him.

"I don't understand," he said with evident reluctance. "You speak of my wife—I know nothing of this!"

Curwood was still standing. He felt the impossibility of friendliness at such a moment, but he had been deeply moved.

"I said that your wife told us," he replied hoarsely, "and she did. She came before the committee this morning and cleared you absolutely."

A deep flush passed over Nicholson's face.

"It was without my knowledge. I never would have permitted it!"

"She told us the whole story." Curwood paused; then his eye kindled. "She's a fine woman! By Heaven, sir, I wish any woman cared for me like that!" He turned, as he spoke, and held out his hand. "I'm sorry for my part in it, Nicholson!"

The Ex-Governor rose slowly. He was pale again, but he took the Senator's hand. There was a moment of embarrassment; then Curwood briefly stated the altered attitude of the committee, the line of action likely to be followed, and the probability of a great change in public feeling.

The telling of it was more difficult than he had imagined. Nicholson was too large-minded a man to show active resentment, but he listened coldly, without enthusiasm. Nothing seemed to appeal to him greatly; he even disregarded the political aspect of the new situation. Senator Curwood saw this and fidgeted on the hearth-rug—a big, heavy man, ill at ease.

"The feeling has changed strongly in your favor," he finally concluded. "There's no doubt at all of your re-nomination."

Nicholson smiled faintly. It seemed to him that all these things—high ambitions and resolves, and wide-spread policies—were far removed. He had passed through the flames, and spiritual-

ly he was as scorched as any Shadrach or Abednego. His answer showed a deeper indifference to the fiery furnace of State politics.

"I'm not sure that I should accept."

Curwood stared.

"You don't mean to say you'd refuse a vindication?"

Nicholson frowned.

"I've never felt the need of it," he replied coldly. "There's only one thing that I'd ask, and that most earnestly. You'll talk of this, you'll all have to discuss it. Can you prevail on the others—on all of them—to leave out my wife's name?"

Curwood considered, his face flushing deeply under the other man's eyes. He knew that enough had already been said to circulate the story through the State; but the request, natural and right enough, seemed to touch a sound spot in him. He looked up.

"I'll do all I can," he said.

Nicholson thanked him with genuine gratitude. There was a brief pause, and then, unable to say more without again mentioning Hester, Curwood took his leave, awkwardly enough.

Once in the street he tried in vain to reconstruct the interview, to make out whether he had given pleasure or offense. To a man like Curwood the Ex-Governor was an inexplicable enigma, but an enigma that had to be swallowed. A keen-scented politician, the Senator knew well enough that the tragic confession of the young and lovely wife had made a hero and a martyr of her husband. Little as he liked the result, he was deeply impressed by the picture of that slender, girlish figure in the great leather chair, and of Hester's face, beautiful and fragile and poignantly sad.

Nicholson had remained standing where his visitor had left him. The rush of feeling that had choked his utterance submerged him now. Like Curwood, he saw a vision; for the picture of Hester before these men came to him as vividly as if he had seen her.

What she must have endured to save him, to make this impression on a man like Curwood! Was it possible that his wife loved him? The bitterness, the blank misery and loneliness, of these last months of his life seemed to engulf him. He felt like a man in the bottom of a pit who suddenly sees a light at the rim of it. He passed his hand over his eyes and, half unconsciously, he spoke her name.

"Hester!"

As if in answer, he heard footsteps in the hall. He turned eagerly toward the door. It seemed as if she might enter now just as she had entered as a bride. But it was Ashmead with a letter.

"A special messenger, sir, from Miss Warren."

Nicholson's heart sank. He tore open the envelope and saw a few lines scrawled below in pencil.

Hester has gone. She went before breakfast this morning. She was seen going out alone, and no one can find her. Is she with you? Oh, please let me know! She was heart-broken; she had an idea that she had deeply and irrevocably injured you. I'm afraid—afraid!

LAURA.

The words sent a thrill of horror through him. He awoke from his dream with a shock; when he had thought of her as coming home, she had been fleeing from him! He crushed the letter in his pocket, he would not tell even Ashmead.

Hester had borne enough, and if any one found her he must be that one. He knew what Laura did not—that she had been that morning at the Capitol; and he believed that she could not be far away.

He went out at once, leaving Ashmead to answer an insistent telephone-call, and was driven over to the Warrens'. He was admitted, but Laura was not at home. In reply to his sharp questions, the butler gave a reluctant explanation. Miss Laura had gone out an hour ago to search for Mrs. Nicholson, who had not yet come in.

Nicholson asked no more questions, but followed the man—an old and tried servant—up to the library. There he found Mrs. Warren. She started at the sight of the visitor, and, holding her staff with one hand, extended the other.

"Was she with you, William?" the old lady asked.

He shook his head. He was suddenly aware of the familiar outline of the room, and of the sound of the church-chimes sounding the hour. It was like the ancient watchman's cry of "All's well!"

"She went out alone this morning," Mrs. Warren said. "We waited breakfast; then we waited lunch. Laura has gone out to look for her. If any one can find her, Laura will!"

Nicholson began to walk the floor, his head bowed. The wild, untrammelled, girlish nature had broken through its restraints at last. Where could she be? Then he became aware of Mrs. Warren's voice.

"She was wretched, William. I wanted to send for you, but I didn't dare!"

"I wish you had!" he exclaimed bitterly. Then he took the old lady's hand and led her back to her chair. "I'm going out to find her," he said gently. "If she should come here first, will you tell her"—he spoke with difficulty—"that I entreat her to do nothing more, to say nothing more, until she sees me?"

His old friend looked at him steadily, holding his hand in hers.

"William, do you mean that you've waked up, that you know you can't let this thing go on, that you can't lose her altogether for—that?"

He pressed her hand.

"I know," he replied hoarsely. "I know I've been losing many things because—because I was the Governor!"

She leaned back in her chair.

"He that seeketh his life shall lose it," she said softly, "and he that giveth his life shall find it!"

As Nicholson went out, her voice lingered in his ears. It was a dark night,

no stars shone, and the wind was rising. A shudder of apprehension passed through him. He felt the damp and chilly air that breathed from the river; silence and death and the falling tide haunted him.

"He that seeketh his life shall lose it!" Had he sought the life of the world so keenly that he must lose all—both for Hester and himself?

He had no time to answer the question. He went out on foot to seek her, to make inquiries, to send telegrams. He was loath to publish her name to the world. He must first do his utmost to find her by his own efforts; but through the night, and well into the day, he searched in vain.

### XXXI

LATE in the afternoon Nicholson went home. He was exhausted from the long strain, and without hope. A little while before he had been forced to apply to the police for help. He was now assured that Hester had not left town by any of the regular trains, nor had she hired a motor. That she was not with any friend he already knew, and the alternative foreshadowed by Laura's fear—the terrible alternative of the river—shook him to the soul.

Search had already been made along the banks of the stream, without result; in the morning the water would be dragged.

As he passed out of town the newsboys had assailed him with the evening papers, and he had bought several, possessed with a morbid horror of seeing Hester's name in print. What he found was the complete vindication for himself that Curwood had foreshadowed. His wife was mentioned, but mentioned in a way that he could not resent.

He laid the newspapers down with a sigh of relief, and turned to survey the landscape. It was still chill and bare, but there was a suggestion of spring in the sky, and the sun was casting long shadows across the road.

Spring! It was an April day when he had brought Hester home to the house which he was now approaching. How wistful and delicate her small face had seemed, how wonderful her eyes! Then he remembered Leonard, the boy he had tried to guide; but he had lost both of them.

What was wrong with him? He had failed—failed so absolutely that the thought of the renewal of his public life only smote him with horror. He had lived for that, and it had turned to dead-sea fruit. His heart and his hands were empty.

His old attitude of mind had unconsciously broken down; the pride which had made him cold and silent when he thought that Hester loved Leonard had crumbled away. He was overwhelmed with a sudden rush of tenderness and compassion.

Ashmead was waiting for him, and had a number of letters and despatches, but Nicholson put them aside and took up the telephone-message that his secretary had just jotted down. It came from a private detective.

Mrs. Nicholson was seen going out in the direction of your country place to-day. Will send out within an hour to investigate this clue.

Nicholson thrust the paper into his pocket and drank a cup of hot coffee which the butler had brought at his demand. He refused food, though he had eaten nothing. Then he turned to Ashmead.

"I'm going out. I may be out all night. Please stay here, Ashmead, and be ready to answer all telephones and despatches."

The secretary, deeply touched by his chief's aspect, held out a deprecating hand.

"For Heaven's sake, sir, eat something first, and rest a while. You'll—you'll break down!"

Nicholson shook his head and went out. The sun had not yet set, and there was an extreme lucidity to the atmos-

phere. It would be impossible to miss a footprint or a broken twig.

He walked down to the river's edge and followed along the stream, his heart heavy. It skirted a section of his estate and then flowed down to the bridge. He went there and, crossing, stood on the farther side, looking up the embankment.

It was very quiet. Some boys were fishing from a dory; a couple of children were playing in the edge of his own woods. It was impossible that Hester could be here, yet he looked, looked painfully, for a footprint in the sand.

A few questions brought quick negatives from the lads in the boat and those on the shore. No lady had been seen, there were no tracks but theirs. They gazed after him round-eyed, well aware that it was the Ex-Governor; but Nicholson went on, too absorbed to even notice their amazement.

A few yards more carried him into the woods, where the moss was dead underfoot and the elderberries withered and black on their stems. A squirrel darted before him, and he heard the rasp of a woodpecker overhead in the bare trees. He had a feeling that Hester would go back to the old place by the beeches, the scene of the tragedy. Something would draw her there—perhaps the thought of Leonard; yet he searched there for a long while and found no sign of her.

Dusk was beginning to fall now, and a horrible doubt assailed him again. Had he done right to seek her here, to leave the river?

Then some instinct made him turn to the pool. Not that his mind, even yet, plumbed the wayward impulses of hers, the fierce plunges into misery and remorse after her wild gaiety and fearless courage. To his usually equable temperament such extremes were as unlikely as an avalanche upon a level prairie; yet he, too, had lately tasted misery.

He hurried along the wind-blown path, the dusk falling so fast that it seemed as if it must drip down like rain. Still thinking of her, of her slender beauty,



of the white perfection of her small face and mystical eyes, he pressed forward. It seemed to him that she must be just before him. He felt her presence, almost perceived the delicate, elusive fragrance that hung about her like the essence of spring flowers.

The trees grew thick and ever thicker. Here slender stems and there sturdy, gnarled trunks and the swinging boughs of hemlocks cut off the vista. A startling whistled harshly, and its note, shrill and thin and piercing, seemed to mock him.

Would he ever find Hester again? She was his wife! It had always seemed to him that that claim was inalienable, that in making her his wife he had made sure of her wholly and forever; but to her the bond had been like a cobweb. She had been ready to brush it aside.

And yet how splendidly she had forgotten self to save him! In this keen revival of his love, his need of her came back to him. He wanted to see her, to hold her in his arms and tell her that he loved her; but she had gone!

Then, suddenly, the trees parted, and he saw a woman's figure kneeling beside the pool. In the open space the reflected sky whitened the water, and he saw her plainly.

She had taken off her hat and her long coat, and knelt there, dressed in a dull little frock which he had seen her wear at home. She was absorbed, watching the water, her eyes fascinated. Her long hair, loose and unbound, fell in a mist about her small, pale face. She looked like a mere child.

She was kneeling on a rock that jutted out over the little lake. As he watched her she rose and took a step forward. Not until that moment did he realize what she meant to do. His cry stayed her, and she turned her head and faced him as he sprang up the cliff to her side.

"Hester!" he cried, and again: "Hester!"

She said nothing, but clasped her shaking hands against her breast and

stood watching him like a frightened child. He was her husband, but so much seemed to lie between them! She looked up at him. The wild beauty of her face and the mystic charm of her eyes deepened. Never had she seemed so like a wood-nymph.

"I—I'm glad you've come!" she said, a little wildly. "I didn't mean to see you again; but I wanted to tell you how sorry I am. I didn't mean to shame you so, but everything I did was wrong. I ruined you. Can you ever forgive me?"

"Forgive you? What a strange thing to say to me, when you came here to save me! You brave little thing, you dear, dear child!" he cried, and caught her in his arms.

She threw her head back, looking up at him, trembling.

"I've brought all this on you, broken your career, ruined you!" she said wildly. "And I loved you all the time! I came out here to kill myself." He shuddered, holding her close. Her eyes searched his. "You must hate me!"

"Hate you? I count it all well lost, compared to what I've gained!"

"You mean—"

"The knowledge that you cared enough to face them all for me!"

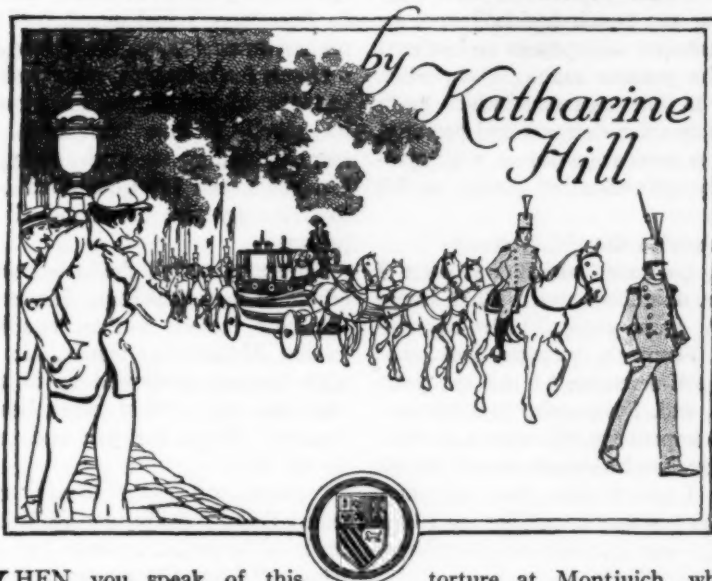
"I've been what they call a child of passion, I think," she said, still distraught; "but it's all burned out of me now. I never did anything they thought I did. I'm not wicked like that—you know it, William!"

"Hester!"

She sighed; her eyes deepened with ineffable tenderness, but she did not speak. A little while before she had stood at the threshold of another world, face to face with that climax of passion which culminates when the edge of life seems near. What need had they for words? They clung together silently, and the rush of mutual feeling that finally united their souls made that moment, in the lives of both, as supreme as it was immortal.



# The Bomb



"WHEN you speak of this girl as your wife, it's merely a concession to convention, is it not? You didn't really submit her and yourself to the degrading ceremony of a marriage?"

Jaime reddened.

"She is truly my wife," he confessed, abashed.

"I see! It is only since then that you became one of us."

The two men sat in a corner of the long, bare room where presently the circle of anarchists to which they belonged would assemble for the meeting. It was natural enough that Jaime Isteve should be there so early, for the night was wet and stormy outside, and he was homeless except for the shelter of this hall, on whose bare benches a man so well trusted as Jaime could always claim the right to sleep.

But that Pedro Fuentes—the great Pedro, leader of the anarchists of Spain—Pedro, who had spent one-third of his adult life in prison, who had undergone

torture at Montjuich, whose steps were ever dogged by detectives, and whose lightest suggestion was sure to be eagerly carried out by the ardent hero-worshippers surrounding him—that Pedro should come early and unescorted to a meeting was unusual.

"No one here but you, Jaime?" he had exclaimed on entering. "Was not the meeting called for ten o'clock, then? And it is already half past."

"For eleven, comrade," Jaime said, his thin, sensitive face lighting with proud pleasure at the prospect of spending half an hour at least alone with the great man. There would be something to boast of, if he ever got back to Seville!

"As Fuentes said to me one night in Barcelona—

"Fuentes disapproves those tactics. Oh, he doesn't say so on the platform, but he told me—"

How casually he would let fall such sentences, big with the greatest name he knew, and how the radicals of his acquaintance in Seville, discontented men

and women who were merely on the fringe of the movement, would stare at him and envy him!

And indeed Fuentes seemed genially disposed enough. Sprawling his huge limbs along the bench beside Jaime, he took out tobacco and papers and offered both to the younger man. Then, when they had lit the cigarettes which both made with Spanish deftness and rapidity, he began to draw from Jaime, very sympathetically, the familiar details of his life.

"You married the girl, you say?"

"I did, comrade, and it was after I became an anarchist, too. What would you have? I was young." The boy reddened at Fuentes's quizzical look, and added in self-defense: "I am six years older now, and, I hope, should know better how to impose my will upon a woman! I was in love, and Mercedes was a devout Catholic. I had to have her, and there was but the one way to get her, so I took that way. For a while we were very happy."

Jaime's dark face grew darker, and Pedro moved closer and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Then — poverty, was it not?" he asked, the flexible, emotional voice with which he swayed crowds silky with sympathy.

The boy nodded.

"I had been concerned in a May-day riot. I was not arrested, but I was one of those who were marked and followed. When the police came to my employer with questions about me, he was frightened, and discharged me. And then it was the same story over again. If I got work for a few days, always by the third or fourth it would become known that I was an anarchist and a dangerous character, and I would lose it again. There was the child, too, and money was needed. It was not because I didn't care that I left Mercedes; but when the neighbors brought in food, when she found sewing to do and was paid for it, when her mother sent a little money, then I was

the third mouth and the biggest to eat up what would have lasted a woman and baby alone twice as long. I brought in nothing, and so it went for months. When I left, I hoped soon to send for her. In Barcelona, I had heard, half the people are anarchists, and it cannot be made a reason for refusing a man work that he has a head and thinks for himself with it! Well, I have been here now ten months, finding no work, living as you can guess, and the time when I was the least hungry was the month I spent in prison!"

He spoke out all the bitterness in him, secure of understanding. He had forgotten how famous a man was his companion, his sense of privilege in speaking with Fuentes swallowed up in the sense that here was a great heart, beating and bleeding always for just such sufferings as his own.

"Have you eaten to-day, brother?" asked Pedro quickly, and as Jaime shook his head he thrust a peseta into the boy's hand. "After the meeting, go and buy food."

Jaime nodded his thanks.

"Happiness with a woman," Fuentes went on; "a little home where you can forget the sufferings of your class, children whom you can afford to feed and warm—all that is sweet! I knew it once. Then, one day, there was a procession of reds, to which we went, my girl and I, like children, to watch what to us was a show and no more. There was a riot and shooting. Rosita was killed by a bullet, and I attacked the soldier who had shot her. I was arrested, tried, and convicted. I served five years in prison, in company with others who could give a reason for being on the plaza that day. When I came out, I was never able to find my children, but I know, of course, where they are — in some institution of charity, taught by monks and nuns, their minds filled with the poison of Christian doctrine and submission, crossing themselves at the name of Pedro Fuentes as at that of the devil!

"But, comrade, mark this. While I was happy, I was an artisan of Barcelona, a submissive slave to my master, my strength and energy given to piling up more wealth for that man, already rich. I came out of prison Pedro Fuentes, at whose name he and those like him tremble! Domestic happiness is the greatest enemy of the revolution. Till a man has lost or forsworn it, I hold him no serviceable tool, and I would never trust him with a secret or important mission. You, Jaime, have learned that security in happiness can never be the lot of the poor man, yet the memory of your Mercedes stays with you and hinders entanglements with the girls of Barcelona. It was because I never saw you with a woman, never heard of you with a woman, that I have thought of you for a certain mission—a certain undertaking, which is to be discussed to-night."

Jaime's heart stopped beating, then began again at a mad pace, as if to make up the time lost.

"Me—for a mission?"

His eyes brightened, his lips parted in a grin—a grin that was partly nervousness, partly gratified vanity at being chosen for an undertaking which clearly, from Pedro's manner, was of the first importance.

"You understand, do you not?" said Fuentes sharply. "It means danger. What do I say? It means death, in every probability! Are you afraid to die for the cause?"

"Oh, try me!" pleaded Jaime, his voice thick and guttural with eagerness. "Only try me!"

His eyes shone now with the mad light of self-devotion, and Fuentes, who had kindled that light often, and knew it well, was satisfied.

## II

YET Jaime blenched for a moment, a little later, when it was disclosed to him what he was chosen to do. The anarchists had assembled tardily, and the meeting opened and proceeded without much

spirit until, near midnight, Fuentes took the floor.

"Comrades," he said, "for months we have skulked in inaction. The world has forgotten that there are anarchists in Spain. The hearts of the people beat sluggishly, lacking the stimulus of some great deed, such as we have sworn to give them. The contemptible imbecile who sits upon the throne at Madrid should die. We are all agreed as to that—applause would burst from all our bosoms for the man or woman who should succeed in killing him. But how often have we attempted his life! How often has some young anarchist dreamed this noble dream of ridding Spain of the tyrant, gone out ready to give his life to that end, and, alas, given his life indeed, while some enchantment has seemed to guard the royal miscreant! It is scarcely possible that an anarchist should be superstitious, but I tell you that it has come to a point where I hesitate—yes, Pedro Fuentes hesitates—to urge on a daring youth to attempt the glorious deed of regicide."

The speaker's tones had been clear and thrilling, but here his voice sank to a lower note.

"Comrades, last night I had an inspiration. The viper has a son—a boy of eighteen months."

Fuentes paused. Jaime knew what was coming next. The roots of his hair prickled, and a sudden sweat broke out upon his face. To kill a child—ah, he had not bargained for that! A baby boy of the age of his own Josito!

A dark wave of horror swept over him. His ears rang, and he did not hear the orator's next words. When at last he wiped his brow, and his scattered senses began to come back to him, Fuentes was saying:

"Some of you may shrink from such an act, because in us anarchists love for that which is pure and innocent is our strongest feeling, although its reverse side—our implacable hatred for cruelty and oppression—is better known to the

world. You would revenge yourselves on the father, you would spare the child? You are wrong. The child dies instantaneously, almost painlessly, before it has had the opportunity to stain itself with the blood of the people. And how, my comrades, can we better strike at these tyrants who rule us than through the one likeness to humanity that remains to them—their love for their children? Here, here is terrorism, here is the way at last to safeguard the future, which alone is ours. Let us kill the serpent's brood, my brothers! Let us stamp out the young and vigorous who come swarming up the thrones of the world, the better to use their strength and their vigor for our oppression!"

The orator sank back, and Jaime cast at him a burning look. He was convinced, as always, by Fuentes's logic, swept away by his eloquence. So was the whole gathering, and the leader's motion was carried by acclaim.

Turning to Jaime, Fuentes asked in a low tone:

"Now that you know what it is that is demanded of you, are you still unshrinking?"

"I am the tool that will not break in your hands," the boy answered earnestly, with a touch of Fuentes's own fervid imagery.

The next moment the anarchist leader was on his feet again, appointing Jaime Isteve as the instrument to execute the will of the circle, and calling for a money appropriation to cover his traveling-expenses to Seville and to purchase the materials with which to construct the bomb.

### III

It was broad noonday, and the sun beat down cruelly from almost the zenith of a sky out of which it had scorched the blue. It beat upon Jaime Isteve's sleek black head, where the brain seethed already with excitement and nervous tension. It beat upon his shoulders, which wriggled under his shabby coat in a vain

attempt to escape the torment. It beat upon the holiday crowd about him, thronging the streets of Seville to see the great procession whose martial music was already, in fitful snatches, borne on the air before it.

Jaime had been standing at his vantage-point against the ropes since early morning that he might be sure of a position close enough to the carriages to admit of no error in his aim. His choice of so conspicuous a spot made his own death practically certain. Even if the bomb did not kill him, he would be seen of all, and would have no chance of getting away through the packed crowd behind him to safety.

No matter! He was resolved that his attempt should not be another fiasco, like so many anarchist attempts, when maimed horses and splintered carriage-wheels had been the only result.

The music came nearer, and the tramp of horses' feet was heard. Jaime stood untrembling, that which he held in his right hand concealed between his handkerchief and the firmly planted leg which shielded it against premature jostling. Fortunately, as he grimly reflected, it could not be ignited by heat, or he and all those around him had been blown piecemeal long since.

As the vanguard of the procession drew abreast of him—the grand marshal, the high-stepping horses, the deafening band—a strong tremor ran through him. For a moment he was half-blinded by nervousness, and his heart beat tumultuously. Then his sight cleared, and he looked steadily before him again.

Soldiers, of course, and soldiers and more soldiers—brilliant uniforms, more bands. Then, yes—the high-plumed horses of the royal carriage. Jaime stared curiously at the king's ugly, oddly charming face, and at the pink-and-white fairness of the queen. His fingers tightened on the small, round thing between them that could deal a dozen deaths.

More horses, more dignitaries in laced coats, escorting the second carriage. This



second carriage, Jaime knew, was to contain the king's young son, a child of eighteen months, for whom primarily—though it must destroy many others—the bomb was intended.

Steeling his breast with Fuentes's words of justification, he turned his eyes slowly where all other eyes were now turned—toward the carriage and its occupants, who would be, at the crucial moment, barely a dozen feet away from him. The muscles rippled on his arms preparatory to a lightning cast, which must be too quick for watching eyes to follow and ready hands to frustrate.

The carriage was drawing nearer now. The engaging baby face, a mere pink blur before, grew clearer. Round, soft cheeks, wide eyes, pursed baby mouth, little waving hands. *Josito!* The thought of his own child, unseen for nearly a year, of like age with the king's, came to Jaime with inhibitory vividness and poignancy.

"The thought of your own child will nerve you," Fuentes had said. "Your child, dead perhaps by now of starvation, that the children of the oppressors may be decked out in richer lace—"

But Jaime could only think of the little cooings and gurglings that the tiny Josito had made when his father snatched him from the cradle and held the small, fair face close against his own, and of the passion of tenderness that had flooded his heart as he did so.

For a moment a traitorous misgiving flickered through him, as his mind flashed back to the man in the first carriage. The king—did the king feel like that when he held his baby in his arms? Of course not! The king was a monster, as was well known. He deserved death unquestionably; but to disserve with hideous violence the soft limbs of a child, to shock and frighten it, even, or injure it in any way—that, Jaime knew with a sad heart as the carriage, unharmed, moved slowly past him, it was not in him to do. It might be well that the serpent's brood should die, but his was not the hand that could kill them!

He had overrated his own heroism—or villainy. He had betrayed the trust of Fuentes; he would rightly be the mock and scorn of all the anarchists who had known of the plot. He was a poor, spineless slave who had not even the nerve to kill where his mind acknowledged that death should be dealt, when the means, the opportunity, were his in perfection!

Self-contempt scorched him, shriveled him. He had become in his own eyes the meanest, the most pitiful of figures.

The carriage containing the baby was far away now, soldiers were tramping before him. He turned to set himself to the task of worming through the mass of people closely wedged about him.

One feeling, and one only, had survived the annihilating blast of his own scorn for himself. Josito, his own little son, whose image had been brought so vividly before him by the sight of that other child, was, if indeed he were still living, somewhere in Seville, and Mercedes—poor, pretty Mercedes—was with him. Jaime would see his son again, would kiss Mercedes again. She would be glad to see him, she had not wanted him to go. What he would do afterward, he knew not.

But, first, the bomb must be got rid of. He went a long way into the country with it, found deep water, and dropped it in. There was a muffled sound, a commotion of the water, then stillness.

Wearily already almost to exhaustion, Jaime rose from the ground where he had flung down, and addressed himself to the long walk back into the city.

#### IV

How familiar the shabby little court looked in the slanting rays of the low sun! Jaime Istevé could almost have believed that he had never been away, that everything was as it had been a year ago, when he and Mercedes and Josito had lived together in the one little room above there.

He had little hope that he would find his wife there now. She would have been



forced by poverty to move away, most probably, though Heaven knew what place cheaper than this one she could find. Perhaps the neighbors could tell him where she was.

He went up the black, crooked stairs, his mouth dry, his heart aching with the old memories that the familiar lights and smells of the house brought to him.

What sound was that? The laughter of Mercedes, gay, triumphant, girlish, in peal on peal; and between, a sound that was unmistakably the sound of kisses!

Jaime could conceive of but one explanation for this—that Mercedes had taken a lover. His Spanish blood flamed. He forgot his fatigue, his diffidence, and his self-scorn; he had no thought but to punish the two who had betrayed him.

He was up the remaining steps in a series of bounds, and violently flung open the door of their old room, whence the sounds had come.

There was no man there, only Mercedes with little Josito in her arms. For a flashing instant, as he entered, he saw her cheeks red with happiness, her mouth still widened with laughter; but at the sudden sight of him the color drained away, and she was startled into a statue of surprise.

"Jaime!" she screamed, as soon as she found voice. "Holy Virgin, this is too much happiness!"

She rushed into her husband's arms.

For a time the feel of her soft, firm-clinging body and of the baby's round contours, both again in the circle of his arms, was enough for Jaime, and he thrilled to it with closed eyes; but presently he opened them, and they went marveling about the room.

The broken-legged table was covered with good things to eat and drink—milk and wine and white bread, fruit and chocolate, and a bundle wrapped in paper through which, in spots, blood had oozed; that would be a kingly roast of meat! Some handsome clothes, quite new, lay over a chair, and on the edge of the table lay four, five, six—there must have been

ten or more, in all—broad pieces of gold, and a little heap of silver beside them.

Jaime drew Josito out of his wife's arms and held him off for a good, long look. With surprise and a kind of dread, he perceived a likeness.

"Why—why, he's just like the king's little son!" he said, stunned with the wonder of it.

"Aha! My little king that I made!" cried Mercedes, snatching the child to her again. "He is like the king's son, indeed! That is why we have new clothes, and more food than we can eat, and money, besides, to last us for months! Listen, and I will tell you. The king's son was to ride in the procession to-day, but the queen, she was afraid for him. Herself, she would go in the carriage with the king, to be killed if he were killed—for the police, do you see, had received warning of an anarchist plot—but the child she would not expose. At eighteen months, especially when half-smothered in lace, all babies look alike; and besides, our Josito, it appears, really resembles the little prince. The sisters spoke for me to a lady of the court, who arranged all. Why do you look so white, Jaime? It was a risk, yes, for there are anarchists cruel enough to murder a child; but which is better, to die quickly by a bomb or slowly by starvation?"

Jaime had fallen back against the door, his mouth opening and shutting without achieving speech, his fingers clutching at the neck of his shirt.

"Do not take it so, Jaime! You see, he came home safe. And, what is best of all, we may have the same opportunity again. Whenever there is a procession in Spain, wherever the little prince has to appear in public—"

But Jaime's long, lean hand had darted forward, to close on her wrist with desperate tension.

"Never again!" he choked. "Never again such a risk for Josito! I will find work—no matter how, I will find it! Woman, you do not know how close to death the child may have been to-day!"

# Waifs

by  
Grace Sartwell Mason

Author of  
"The Car and the Lady."  
"The Golden Hope," etc.



## *A Complete Novelette*

IT was about four o'clock in the morning when the girl sat up suddenly in her narrow bed and clasped her knees with her arms. She put her chin down upon her knees and stared frowningly at the spot under the worn counterpane where her toes moved restlessly up and down and back and forth, as they always did when she was thinking hard.

In the counterpane, just over her right foot, was a ragged hole, through which a bit of sad, gray blanket showed. The girl stared at it drearily.

"I was getting to be just like you," she told the blanket. "Just like you—dingy and shabby, and—yes, furtive! Furtive! Me!"

She looked up and, around the room with a sort of surprise. She pressed her hands against her breast.

"Me!" she repeated. "It's like a bad dream!"

There followed a long interval in which she sat as still and rigid as if carved there on her narrow bed, like the effigy of a lady on an ancient tomb. It seemed as if the sculptor who carved her had done so with loving care for many tender de-

tails—for the lithe, slender outlines of her body, the rounded slenderness of her arms, the whimsical curve of her scarlet lips, the length of the lashes that made her gray eyes darker, the little hollow at the base of her thin throat, the lovely modeling of a white shoulder.

She sat a long time, thinking, thinking; then she made a little grimace and moved her toes again restlessly, impatiently.

"Why shouldn't it be you?" she demanded under her breath. "Why shouldn't it be you, as well as some other girl? What have you ever done to deserve what you want? What are your exalted qualifications? Answer me that! Now look here"—she held up a forefinger and wagged it—"now look here, Mari-gold Bynner, if you're going to begin to pity yourself, you'll *wallow*! You don't want to do that, do you? No!"

She lifted her chin proudly, but even as she did so her lips quivered. She pressed them tightly together, until all their whimsical curves were lost, and clenched her hands.

"No pity! No pity, you little fool!" she whispered fiercely.

But it was no use. Four o'clock in the morning is not an hour that brings out fortitude and valor. It is the hour that belongs to panic fear, the hour when grim goblins of doubt come out to loll on the footboard, when wan remorse creeps under the bedclothes, and cold terror squats on the chest.

Usually Marigold, in her narrow bed, slept through this hour as soundly as a care-free child; but this morning it was different. This morning she had come to the end of her tether. Genuine fear, which is so different from the fear that children and some grown-up folk enjoy titillating their nerves with, was in her heart.

It had been there all through the night; it grew as the mists of sleep melted from her eyes. It set her to shivering; it contracted her heart and widened the pupils of her eyes until they were black and shining with terror. It drove her now out of her narrow bed and set her to walking nervously up and down the room, up and down, her bare feet peeping in and out from under the hem of her nightgown, her tumbled hair falling about her shoulders.

She could no longer think; she could only feel. And it seemed to her that this narrow room she paced was but a single plank over an abyss that yawned for her—an abyss black as despair, packed with a mist of fear. It was a deep gulf filled with nameless, shapeless apprehensions born of things she had read in city newspapers, gestures she had seen on city corners, the gleam of eyes she had shrunk from on city streets. She seemed to feel herself reeling, falling, clutching at her plank, missing it and going on down to an unspeakable fate, a little lost atom in the chaos of the world.

Twisting and wringing her hands she walked; and slowly the light of a June day crept down between the tall houses and in at the girl's window.

It touched with unsparing fingers the bleak sordidness of the room—a narrow room with a sloping ceiling and a dormer-

window in one end. Against the wall stood the tumbled cot from which the girl had arisen. In the end wall was a door against which a cheap and battered wash-stand was pushed.

An old, high-shouldered bureau of black walnut stood in the corner by the dormer-window. The girl had often smiled at it. It seemed to her to resemble a prim, disapproving old person. It should have worn a cap and a cameo pin, and should have wept over the long-departed days when this old house was not a rooming-house, but a home; when servants slept on this top floor, and elegant, fortunate mortals went their way in and out of the high-ceilinged rooms below.

But on this morning, when she crawled out of bed to pace the floor, there was no room in Marigold Bynner's mind for whimsies. The real things held her in their iron grip. She was frightened, scared to the bottom of her soul. She had come to the end of her tether, to the ultimate catastrophe—she had not one penny!

"And yesterday," she sobbed, "yesterday I had enough to keep me for weeks and weeks!"

Yesterday she had had eighty-three good dollars, and this morning she had not a penny in the world. It is astonishing how many fair possibilities there are in life when one has eighty-three good dollars, and how many dreadful probabilities there are when one has not one penny. To the girl, in this moment, it seemed as if all these threatening probabilities were crushing down upon her. Walking up and down, up and down, wringing her hands, she began to sob, catching her breath like a frightened child.

"Why did I do it?" she besought the old bureau, the dingy walls. "I must have been crazy, out of my mind, mad! No one in the world but me would have done such a thing. No one! I must have a queerness in me somewhere. Perhaps I'm not well balanced. Perhaps I'm just a plain f-f-fool!"

She stopped in front of the high-shouldered bureau and earnestly examined her own image, as well as she could for her streaming eyes. What she saw there must have somewhat reassured her, for her sobs ceased. Wiping her eyes, she went to an old black-walnut wardrobe and thrust in her arm.

Then, slowly, carefully, she lifted something out. It was a gown—what the Englishwoman calls a costume—of the loveliest, softest shade of fawn-colored cloth. It had a little jacket, a crisply plaited skirt, and a wide girdle of suede; and its every line was delicately, adorably Parisian. Its simplicity was so right, so beautifully right, that it might have been worn by some young princess with a most unprincesslike taste in clothes.

Slowly, carefully, with the reverent touch a woman bestows only upon a perfect gown, the girl draped it over the back of a chair. Then from the wardrobe she took a hat and placed it against the gown. It was the one hat in all the world for that particular gown.

Then she brought out a pair of boots—smart little boots with fawn-colored tops that matched to a hair's breadth the delectable shade of the gown. These boots she placed so that they peeped out from under the hem of the gown in a lifelike manner. Then she fell back and contemplated the ensemble.

Slowly a gleam of pleasure struggled through the tears in her eyes. A little uncertain smile uplifted the corner of her mouth. She put out the tip of her tongue and moistened her feverish lips, as if she actually tasted the deliciousness of the sartorial effect before her.

"I may be a fool," she whispered, "but I really have good taste in clothes!"

Then she caught what might almost have been called a glance from the high-shouldered bureau. It seemed to her that it glowered at her with a certain sour derision. She lifted a forefinger at it.

"Don't you look so shocked! If I—if I die, I'll die well dressed!"

Then, all at once, her power of whimsical make-believe, all her courage that was born of youth and a gay heart and ignorance and a certain essential intrepidity, deserted her. The room, the sordid reality of it, caught her. She went down on her knees beside her cot, clutching at the bedclothes, holding them up to her mouth to stifle the sound of her breathless sobs, quivering, shaking.

"I don't want to die!" she quavered. "I'm too young to die. I want to live. I want to be happy—to be happy—to be happy!"

The sound of her choking whispers filled the room. The breath of all the waifs that had passed through that room and lived their gray dreams there blew cold on her cheeks. Perhaps one with eyes to see might have observed them coming out of their hiding-places, looking at their sister with comprehension in their gaze, touching her hair and drifting on. They knew the road ahead of her; and the breath of their knowledge turned her to ice with fear.

For a long time she knelt there, her hands clenching and unclenching upon the ragged bedclothes, while slowly the day brightened. The golden morning light fell like the pollen from a flower upon the girl's tumbled hair, bringing out tones of reddish gold in the brown of it; and impartially it fell upon the stained plaster of the walls and upon the carved fruits and flowers of the old bureau.

Over the mirror this carving, in certain lights, bore a distinct likeness to a grimly humorous mask. The girl, with her quick imagination, had caught the resemblance early in her occupancy of the room. Lying on her cot, with her hands clasped under her head, she had often interrogated this satirically smiling face, asking it the questions that many had asked before in that room. Whither was she drifting? How long could she hold out? What fate awaited her around the corner of to-morrow?

This morning, as the light deepened, she instinctively turned her face upward



toward the old bureau. As she did so, she became aware that for a long time some sound from the next room had been plucking at her consciousness. It was the whimper of a child.

Now that she thought about it, it seemed to her that she had been hearing sounds from the next room at intervals all night; and yet she could not recall the exact nature of them. She must have slept, in spite of her troubled mind, almost as soundly as usual for the greater part of the night.

She had a vague remembrance of a strange voice from beyond the door behind her wash-stand, and of her landlady's voice answering it. Some quality in their tones had startled her from sleep, and her first confused thought had been that the house was on fire. That was the only way she could account for a man's voice in her landlady's room, and the only way she could account for the note of fright in Mrs. Mackey's voice. She had risen on her elbow to listen; then, as silence fell again in the room next door, sleep had claimed her.

Between that time and four o'clock she had been awakened once or twice, and each time by the same sounds—the hurried shuffling of papers or the mutter of an insistent conversation. Once the man's voice had risen above the furtive level of the conversation, or else he had moved nearer to the door between the two rooms, for the girl heard him snarl:

"You always was a liar!"

In reply, Mrs. Mackey had laughed her throaty, derisive laugh. The whole episode had added the crowning touch of sordid misery to the girl's mood. She had turned over and buried her face in the pillow with a groan; and then, mercifully, sleep had intervened between her and whatever was taking place in the next room.

But now she was wide awake, and in the room next door a child was crying. At first it had been a tentative sound, the sort of noise a child makes when it is comfortably certain that its wants will

soon be attended to. Then it had swelled to an imperious demand, and now it had developed into a heart-broken wail. The girl could catch a word here and there amid the welter of grief and temper.

"Mommy, I want to git out! I want my bekkus! I's 'fwaid! Mommy! Mommy!"

Marigold went to the wash-stand, pushed it aside, and put her lips close to the door.

"What's the matter, Angie? Where is your mother?"

A pause full of breath-catchings. Then a little voice from the other side:

"I don't know. I want my bekkus!"

"But why don't you go down-stairs, Angie? Perhaps your mother is in the kitchen."

Sobs and wails and a few broken words. The girl turned away from the door with a puzzled expression in her face, threw a kimono about her shoulders, and went out into the hall. She tried the door of her landlady's bedroom. The child had spoken the truth—it was locked.

"That's queer!" the girl thought.

She bent and examined the keyhole. The door had been locked, she judged, from the outside, for the key was gone.

"Listen, Angie dear," she called through the keyhole. "I'll get dressed and find your mother. Don't cry any more, there's a good little girl, and I'll be right back."

The sound of sobs from within abated a little, but as Marigold dressed she could still hear them at intervals, and they added to the weight on her own spirits. After she had dressed, and before she went out into the hall again, she put away with a tender and lingering touch the fawn-colored dress, the hat, and the charming little boots.

Then she went down the stairs.

## II

THIS house, over which for some months Mrs. Mackey had presided in a slack, haphazard manner, was one of those which the city, in its growth, had over-



taken and ruthlessly demoralized. Twenty years before, to live on this street had been the last word in desirability, and this particular house had been one of the most distinguished in its neighborhood. To-day only the feet of wanderers passed over its threshold—cabaret artists, second-rate vaudeville performers, dubious practitioners of more than dubious healing powers, clairvoyants, a shabby fiddler or two—all inhabitants of the world that lives by its wits or by a hectic talent.

And yet, overlaid with the grime and neglect of twenty adverse years, there persisted in the old house a rococo grandeur, a sort of mid-Victorian gesture of elegance, stately even though ugly. No amount of battering by expressmen bearing trunks up the long stairway could break the spirit of the ornate black-walnut banisters. No neglect could entirely obscure the splendor of the pseudo-Moorish lamp that hung from the ceiling in the dimness of the hall. It was covered with the dust of years; but to Marigold, whenever in descending the stairs her eyes fell on it, the lamp was a symbol of the spirit of the old house, the spirit that still clung like an imperishable aroma in discolored corners of the high ceilings, and in the premature shadows that gathered along the black-walnut wainscoting and draped the high, dingy mantelpieces.

Something about the old house, in these moments, always made her feel sorry, as if it called to her dumbly to appreciate what it had once been. Something always seemed to quiver out of the musty shadows of the halls, to pluck at her elbow, to beg her to pause and consider the things that were irrevocably gone.

She had never felt the dumb spirit of the house so keenly as this morning, when she went in search of her landlady. Her uneasy, depressing night, her bad hour at dawn, and poor little Angie's sobs, all combined to make her doubly sensitive to the atmosphere of the place; but beyond these obvious causes was a vague,

disquieting premonition that followed her and deepened as she felt her way down the dark basement stairs.

Why had Mrs. Mackey locked her door? And why was the house so quiet down here?

As Marigold reached the foot of the basement stairs, a smell indescribably compounded of burned gas, ghosts of Brussels sprouts, and laundry soap, assailed her nostrils; but there was no odor of breakfast.

At the foot of the stairs was the area door, back from which ran a narrow, musty hall. At the front of the basement, with a high window opening upon the areaway, was the room used by Mrs. Mackey as a kitchen. Here she was generally to be found, either cooking a desultory meal over the small gas-stove, or stretched indolently on the couch under the window with a paper-bound novel in her hand.

This morning, when Marigold had knocked, and then, receiving no response, pushed open the door, the kitchen was empty. The north light came down grayly through the dusty area window, but it showed no preparation for breakfast.

On the red-checked cloth of the small table in the middle of the room stood a coffee-pot, cups and plates for two, and the debris of a meal. Marigold put her finger-tip to the coffee-pot. It was cold. Evidently this meal had been an extremely early breakfast, or, what was more likely in Mrs. Mackey's case, a late supper.

Beyond the kitchen stretched a series of rooms which, in the golden days of the old house, had been storerooms, laundry, and wine-cellars. After a moment's hesitation the girl went down the hall, opening the door into each of these places. They were empty of everything but dust, cobwebs, and rubbish. It was with a sense of relief that she closed the last door and started back up the hall.

As she turned about toward the front of the house again, a shadow fell across

the glass of the area door. Some one was coming down the area steps. There was no reason why she should not believe this to be Mrs. Mackey returning from early marketing; and yet the girl paused and stood still, waiting, oddly expectant. And then there came, not a ring at the area bell, but a knock, which managed to be somehow bold and at the same time furtive.

Afterward, in thinking over the events of that most momentous day of her life, the girl knew that what made her hesitate half-way down the hallway was not the discovery that the figure on the other side of the area door was a man's, but the silhouette he presented through the thin curtain stretched over the glass. He had evidently knocked and then turned to look up the area steps, for he presented to the girl's gaze a profile cut clean against the glass by the morning light.

If ever a human profile resembled that of an evil bird, this man's did. His thin nose was like a simitar curving down over a hungry mouth, his chin and lower jaw were thin and cruel, his forehead sloped back abruptly above his sleek, black brows. He was taller than the average. When he turned about to face the door, the girl saw that although his shoulders were narrow, and one of them was two inches higher than the other, they looked wiry rather than weak.

As Marigold hesitated, curiously fascinated by his outline against the glass, he glanced quickly over his shoulder, and then rapped once more, this time imperiously. With a reluctance that she herself did not understand, she moved to the door and opened it a few inches.

The man had stationed himself so close to the door, and he turned at its opening with so watchful an eagerness, that the girl shrank back a little, with a feeling that she was about to be pounced upon. His very black, bright eyes grew blank as he saw her. It was plain that she was not the person whom he had expected to see when that door opened.

"Mrs. Mackey here?" he demanded.

"She is not in."

"But she lives here?"

"Yes."

"Well, then"—the man's eyes went past Marigold and down the hall—"I will come in and wait."

There was no particular reason why she should not have shown him into Mrs. Mackey's kitchen and gone on her way. She was not in charge of the house; she knew nothing of Mrs. Mackey's affairs, and less of Mrs. Mackey's visitors. But some instinct made her lessen the crack of the door by another inch.

"You will have to come back later," she began, but stopped, for the man had quietly and adroitly moved his left foot until it was in the crack of the door. A sudden, unreasoning sense of terror swept over the girl. She was conscious of the still darkness of the deserted basement behind her, and of the sleeping house above-stairs.

What would have happened next she could afterward only conjecture, for at this instant a black skirt and a pair of large, flat feet became visible at the top of the area steps. Sarah, Mrs. Mackey's maid by the day, was arriving.

The man, hearing the servant's footsteps, whirled, and Marigold, watching him, knew that he was not only hunter but hunted. He stepped aside to let the colored girl pass him, but he made no effort to follow her in, and Marigold closed the door quickly.

Through the muslin curtain she watched him. He stood outside irresolutely for a moment, gnawing at a corner of his lower lip. Then he mounted the area steps, glancing quickly up and down the street before he fully emerged from the shelter of the area railing.

Marigold, with Sarah at her heels, mounted the basement stairs. The late-rising inhabitants of the lower floor still slept; but at the foot of the third flight stood the bath-robed figure of Mr. Sammy Plevins, who occupied the room directly beneath the one in which Angie had now resumed her wailing.

Mr. Plevins slept by day and worked by night at some mysterious calling that necessitated a top hat, much in need of blocking, and very broad, black braid down the seams of his trousers. Just now he was plainly in a high state of temper.

"Why don't somebody take care o' that kid?" he demanded of Sarah. "D' you expect I can sleep with a kid whoopin' her up for two hours? I come home early last night on purpose to get some sleep, and then somebody up there walked the floor all night!"

Marigold avoided his indignant eye. Sarah turned and began to walk flat-footed up the last flight of stairs.

"I's goin' to 'tend to Angie right now, Mr. Plevins," she said.

Distinctly, on a rising wail, they heard Angie's little voice, now hoarse from weeping:

"I want my bekkus! I's 'fwaid!"

"Darned shame, treat a little kid like that!" declared Plevins. "Go off with a man and leave a little kid alone—"

Marigold turned back from the stairs quickly.

"What did you say? Did Mrs. Mackey—"

Sammy Plevins glanced up at her with an eye like a knowing, wary gutter-sparrow's.

"Saw her going out the basement door about two. With a man. I come home early on purpose to—"

"With a man! Are you sure?" the girl interrupted.

Plevins winked a tired and bored wink.

"Surest thing you know!" Then abruptly his face assumed an aggrieved expression. "You can't depend on 'em," he sighed. Marigold did not know whether he referred to landladies as a class, or to the sex in general. "I been thinkin' of quittin' here, anyway," he added.

"Say!" It was Sarah's voice from above. "If I had a button-hook, I bet I could unlock this here door!"

"Unlock it!" Plevins cried. "Wouldn't that grab you? Go off at 2 A.M. and leave her kid locked in! Can you beat it?"

From a door across the hall a head thrust out—an auburn head done up in curlers that made little lumps under a soiled boudoir cap.

"Who's gone off, Sammy?" the owner of the head demanded briskly. "What's the row about?" She came out of the room now, folding about her plump figure a kimono that managed to be gay in spite of its dinginess. "What's Angie cryin' for?"

Mr. Plevins laconically explained that Angie was crying for her mother, her unworthy mother, who at two o'clock in the morning had gone off "on a toot."

"But you don't know she did anything of the kind!" Marigold cried suddenly. "You saw her go out with a man, but that doesn't mean that she—that she—"

Sammy Plevins and Mrs. Gaulot of the auburn hair exchanged amused and indulgent winks. Mrs. Gaulot reached up to pat the girl's hand where it rested on the newel-post.

"Go on, deary!" she laughed. "Don't you try to teach them that knows more than you've ever begun to learn!"

Both of them laughed again. The light from Mrs. Gaulot's half-opened door, striking across the gloom of the hall, touched with remorseless fingers the network of fine wrinkles about Mrs. Gaulot's hard eyes, and spared none of the evil knowledge in Sammy Plevins's face.

The girl standing above them on the stairs instinctively drew back a little. She seemed to feel all at once the texture of their two souls, as grimy and stained and ugly as the worn strip of carpet under her feet. It swept over her—a loathing of them, of the grime and sordidness of the old house, of the grim undercurrents of every life behind those battered doors. She wanted to rush out into the sweet morning, to run until she found some clean and peaceful spot where she could lie down and die and be rid forever of the ugly burden of life.

"I'll get you a button-hook, Sarah," she said, and turned her back on Mrs. Gaulot and Sammy Plevins.

Their curiosity having been aroused, they followed her up-stairs to the door behind which Angie was crying. The button-hook proved of no avail, and, after a few attempts, Mrs. Gaulot made the suggestion that they should collect all the keys in the house and try them until they found one that would open the door. Thus it happened that in a very few moments every lodger under the roof of the old mansion knew that the landlady had mysteriously disappeared.

Mrs. Mackey's lodgers were for the most part occupied in ways that gave them the right to consider eight o'clock in the morning as the middle of the night; but when Mrs. Gaulot and Plevins returned they were followed by several whose love of sensation was stronger than their need of sleep. These were Mrs. Dave Henricus of Flickenger's Cabaret, two girls, demonstrators of a complexion cream, the wife of a peripatetic painless dentist, and a gloomy young man in a red bath-robe. They grouped themselves in the narrow hall, while Plevins tried the keys they had contributed.

There was no sound from beyond the door now. As Plevins bent over the lock, a strange silence fell upon the men and women waiting for the key to turn.

When at last the lock clicked, one of the girl demonstrators gave a nervous giggle. Plevins hesitated, turning a sickly grin upon her, with his hand on the knob.

Marigold pushed his hand away.

"If you're afraid," she cried, "let me!"

She opened the door, and the others crowded in behind her. What probably struck all of them first was not the small nightgowned figure that slept the sleep of exhaustion on a pile of blankets in the middle of the room, but the condition of the room itself. Every bureau drawer had been pulled out and emptied upon the floor, the bed itself had been pulled to

pieces, and an old roll-top desk stood inches deep in a drift of papers, letters, yellowed clippings, photographs, and faded souvenirs.

The room had been very evidently treated to a thorough search by some one in impatience or anger or great haste.

"Burglars!" breathed one of the girl demonstrators hopefully.

"G'wan!" snorted Plevins. "Do you think a burglar 'd steal Mrs. Mackey—and then lock the door?"

They laughed a little, as if relieved of a strain, and began poking curiously about the disordered room; but Marigold knelt down beside the little, crumpled figure on the blankets. Very gently, with a gesture of pity, she gathered it up in her arms. A head of tendrilly curls, colored like corn-silk, snuggled against her shoulder. Angie opened her eyes, and her lips began to quiver again as she saw the circle of faces about her.

"I want my bekkus! I want my mommy!" she wailed.

"Where did your mother go, Angie?"

Mrs. Gaulot asked the question. The child shook her head, sobbing.

"Did she sleep here with you last night?"

This last was from Sammy Plevins. All the eyes bent upon the child sharpened with curiosity. Marigold stood up abruptly, pressing the curly head against her shoulder.

"Don't ask her such questions!" she cried. "Let me pass! I'll take her down and feed her. Can't you see she's worn out?"

The child slid one arm around the neck of her new friend, put her head down upon the girl's shoulder, and murmured, apparently aware for the first time of the dramatic advantages of the situation:

"I's worn out!"

### III

WITH the child in her arms the girl made her way out into the hall. She had never liked her landlady. Mrs. Mackey had always seemed to her a strange com-



bination of slack, overfed body and greedy, restless soul. During the few weeks the girl had spent in that house they had not exchanged more than a score of words; and yet Marigold now found herself instinctively taking Mrs. Mackey's part against the hard curiosity, the cynical suspicions, of her fellow lodgers.

What had not struck them, but had made a quick impression on her sensitive imagination, was a sense in that disordered bedroom of catastrophe, of haste and despair. What had happened there during the night? Who was the man who had accused Mrs. Mackey of being always a liar? And where had they gone? And why?

Marigold Bynner had in her way as much curiosity as the others, but something fastidious in her kept her from discussing the mystery with Mrs. Gaulot and Sammy Plevins and the rest. As she turned away from the door, however, something that Mrs. Henricus was saying arrested her attention. She stood still at the top of the stairs, listening.

"It was just about eight," said Mrs. Henricus eagerly. "I was going out, and I heard the telephone ring. Thinkin' it might be a call for me, I waited until Mrs. Mackey come up from the basement to answer it. She didn't see me—I was standin' at the foot of the stairs—but I saw *her* all right. And believe me, what I saw give me a jolt! She took down the receiver. 'Yes,' says she, 'this is Mrs. Mackey.' Then she give a kind of gasp, put her hand over the mouthpiece in a hurry, and looked up and down the hall."

"Did she see you?" queried Mrs. Gaulot.

"No. I'd stepped back when I heard her gasp, and I was lookin' down over the banister. I see her put her mouth close to the phone and whisper, 'Where are you now?' The next minute I heard her say, sharp and fierce, 'No! No! No!'—just like that. Then she jammed the receiver back as if it had bit her. I went on down the stairs—then, and when I made the turn I see that she was sprawled out

limp all over the hall table. 'My land, Mrs. Mackey,' says I, 'what's the matter with you? Are you faint?' She started up and shook her head; but her face was like chalk. And if ever I saw"—Mrs. Henricus lowered her voice to the true note of mystery—"if ever I saw a woman plumb scared to the bone, it was Mrs. Mackey!"

The girl heard a rustle of interest, a number of vacuous exclamations.

"Scared, eh?" repeated Plevins thoughtfully. "Looks bad!"

There was an instant's silence. Then one of the girl demonstrators said:

"She ain't put a clean towel in our room in two days."

"No," came the voice of Mrs. Gaulot, "nor I haven't had mine swept in over a week. Freddy and me don't like it. We ain't used to such—"

"Is anybody going to report this disappearance to the police?"

It was the voice of the gloomy young man in the red bath-robe, interrupting for the first time. An uneasy silence followed the question; then Mrs. Gaulot spoke, apparently voicing a general feeling:

"Oh, Lord! if the police are going to come in on this, Freddy and me'll get out. We believe in advertisin', but not *that* kind!"

There was a sound of general assent. The girl with the child in her arms turned and went down the stairs.

"What cowards they are!" she thought.

After all, she was very young. She had the intolerance of youth, and, in spite of her perplexities, life had not yet seared her as it had seared those others. The clinging arms of the child gave her a strange thrill of tenderness. She had never supposed that she cared for children especially, but something protective and proprietary was aroused in her by the mere fact that this child clung to her, that there was no one else willing to take care of it. She was glad to get away from her own problem for a while, to forget



her loneliness in doing something for another human being.

Wrapping the little girl in one of Mrs. Mackey's everlasting kimonos, which hung behind the kitchen door, she put her in her high chair, lighted the gas-plate, and put on the kettle. Then she washed the child's feverish face and grimy little hands.

Angie submitted in a patient silence. She was evidently sizing up her new friend. Her deep-blue eyes seemed brimming with queer old thoughts. Then suddenly she dodged the towel in Marigold's hand, put her head on one side, listening, and ran to open the door that led into the storeroom.

A tiny kitten darted out into the kitchen. It was a sooty kitten, thin, furtive, all its kittenish instincts subdued by its lonely, underground existence. It stopped in the middle of the room, looking from the girl to the child with a premature caution in its canny, green eyes. Over the child's face an adoring smile flashed.

"My kitty, my booful kitty!" she crowed.

And suddenly into the girl's heart a little pain darted—a sense of the pitifulness of all helpless things, kittens and babies and penniless girls.

"Waifs!" she said aloud, smiling whimsically. "Just waifs, the three of us! But we're going to have breakfast, anyway—and that's more than lots of waifs will have this morning!"

#### IV

BEFORE the meal was over the three of them had reached terms of intimacy and understanding. Angie had confided to Marigold the life history of the sooty kitten, and her own private belief that a witch dwelt in the coal-bin. The kitten had experienced, for the first time in many weeks, the ecstasy of a stomach full of warm milk; and Marigold herself looked less strained and tired.

Just to have some one to talk to, to play with, to feed and comfort! She had not realized how starved she was for human

relationships until this morning. At the back of her head there was the thought that for a girl without a cent to her name this was no way to be starting the day, just sitting there idly with a baby and a kitten in her lap; but the lethargy that had been stealing over her for weeks had deepened this morning into a positive inability to think or plan for the future. She thrust the thought of to-morrow behind her, and set herself to tidying Mrs. Mackey's kitchen.

After this task was accomplished, she took Angela up-stairs, bathed her, and dressed her in a clean but faded gingham frock. Then, not knowing quite what to do, she came back down-stairs again.

By this time the house was awake, and full of an unusual bustle. Doors were open here and there, and kimono-clad figures went in and out of one another's rooms. Mr. Plevins and two other men stood at the foot of the front stairs, talking in low tones. To avoid them, the girl went down the back stairs to the lower floor, and then, leading Angela, slipped down the basement stairs.

Unlike her fellow lodgers, she had no immediate desires, no plans, no ambition. She clutched at the excuse for inaction which her landlady's disappearance offered her. Deferred for a few hours was the painful moment when she should have to admit that she could not pay her room-rent. In the reaction from the emotion of the early morning hours, she felt even a wan sort of happiness, as one who has been granted a reprieve.

It was toward noon that there came a ring at the area door. Thinking that Mrs. Mackey might at last have returned, Marigold hastened toward the door; but before she had taken two steps down the hall she stopped and shrank back against the wall. Close outside the area door, his profile presented to her, stood the man with the beaky nose. She had no intention of opening the door to him a second time, so she stood still and watched him.

At first he waited motionless, with a certain arrogant certitude in his bearing.

Then, when no one answered his ring, he faced the door with a quick movement and rang again with a savage jab at the bell, keeping his thumb upon it so long that the girl began to fear lest Sarah should hear and come down to answer it. But Sarah did not appear, and presently the beaky nose was pressed for one last time against the glass of the area door; then, slowly, the man turned away.

Marigold saw him mount the area steps part way and pause, with his misshapen shoulders just above the pavement and his predatory head turning this way and that. Something about the house across the way appeared to attract and hold his attention. For a long time he stood thoughtfully regarding it; then he went on to the top of the area steps.

The girl stole on tiptoe down the hall, and in turn pressed her nose against the curtain of the area door. The man with the beaky nose was now standing on the steps of the house across the street, ringing the bell; and Marigold saw that there was a "rooms to let" sign close by his hand.

In a flash she knew what he was going to do. She did not need to see what followed—the opened door, a pause, a curtain lifted in one of the second-floor windows, the large, gray bulk of the landlady stepping back from the window, and then, taking her place, a flash of white teeth and black eyes, a quick stooping of the head to glance across the street, a gesture of approval—to know that the man with the profile of an evil bird had rented the upper room. No doubt he would sit there like a vulture on a branch until Mrs. Mackey appeared, or until he was satisfied that she was not in her house.

Somehow the whole thing sent a little chill playing up and down the girl's spine. If he was merely a creditor, he was a most unpleasantly determined one! He was after Mrs. Mackey without any disguise, that was certain.

Had he anything to do with her disappearance? Probably not, because he was

clearly taken aback when first told that Mrs. Mackey was not at home. Later on he had evidently come to the conclusion that the girl had lied to him.

"In that case," thought Marigold, "he'll have it in for me! He'll try again."

As she turned away from the area door, Sarah came down the basement stairs. She asked if anything had been seen of Mrs. Mackey yet. Marigold shook her head. The maid stood for an instant in heavy thought, then she burst out:

"I ain't goin' to stay in no house where there's such goin's on. Besides, I ain't had my pay for yesterday, nor the day before. I'm goin' now!"

"But, Sarah, surely Mrs. Mackey will be back before evening! If you go, who will look after the house? And there's Angie, too."

Sarah looked affronted.

"Yo' cain't expect me to be nursemaid an' landlady an' everything, can yo'? I was hired to do them rooms, and when I don't git my pay I leaves!"

She tossed her head defiantly, shifting a bundle of some size that she carried in her apron. Her eyes avoided Marigold's, and something told the girl that the bundle Sarah moved so uneasily was loot. She turned away. She was in no position nor mood to remonstrate with a thieving servant.

"I ain't the only one that's leavin', either," Sarah threw after her. "The Gaulots are goin' to git out this afternoon, that fellah in the third floor back has gone a'ready, and the Henricuses are packin' their trunks. The doc, he's goin', too."

Marigold gasped,

"Do you mean that every one is getting out because Mrs. Mackey has gone away? Surely, for all they know, she may be back any moment. I don't see—"

Sarah gave a cynical gurgle.

"Some of 'em's leavin' because they think the police may be in and take their names, an' some of 'em because they owe

their room-rent. They're goin' while the goin's good, honey!"

A flash of indignant contempt came into the girl's eyes.

"Like rats!" she exclaimed.

The colored woman stared, and then again gurgled comfortably.

"Maybe they is," she assented, refusing the personal application. "But a sinkin' ship's no place to stick to. When you goin', honey?"

The girl did not immediately answer. She stood leaning against the dingy wall, frowning down at the floor. She was thinking of her unpaid room-rent, and how easy it would be to pack her few belongings, pawn her watch, and make a fresh start. The money she could raise on her watch would give her a few days more in which to find something to do. Perhaps in another house, in more cheerful surroundings, she could shake off the lethargy, the feeling of hopelessness that for a long time had clogged her will.

But then she, too, would be a rat with the other rats! What would it feel like to slink away, to hide and dodge? To be not only a waif, but a dishonest waif?

From down the hall came the sound of Angela's voice talking to the beloved kitten. The girl lifted her head.

"I'm going to stay!" she said.

## V

It was not until she heard the area door click behind the craven Sarah that Marigold thought of the man with the beaky nose. When she did recall him, she suddenly set down the kettle she was filling for tea, went down the hall to the area door, and, pushing back the curtain a quarter of an inch, looked up at the middle second-story window in the house across the way.

He was undoubtedly there. He was sitting back from the window, but she could make out blurs of white that were his face and hands, and the flash of a match as he lighted a cigarette. She knew that nothing in the street could escape that quick, black, sidewise glance

of his. She let the curtain fall back into place.

"There's something about you I dislike extremely," she said to herself grimly.

"But when it comes right down to it, I believe I'm just as good a waiter as you are!"

That afternoon a procession of trunks, mostly shabby, frequently marked "theater" or "hotel," filed out of the old house. And after them, one by one or two by two, according to their state of blessedness, tripped or shuffled or stepped softly or trod defiantly the erstwhile lodgers of Mrs. Mackey. They were like shades melting away before a premonition of the light. As Mrs. Gaulot had said, they did not object to publicity, but they did not care for it by way of the police-station.

From the window of the basement kitchen the girl watched them go. It was about nine o'clock when she went up-stairs and explored the house. As far as she could discover, it was absolutely emptied; and a more forlorn, cluttered, repellent emptiness she had never seen.

As she stood in the lower hall, it seemed to her that never before in her life had she known the meaning of the word silence. There was not even the small voice of Angie to relieve the stillness, for Angie had long since gone to sleep on the couch in the kitchen.

Marigold stood listening to the silence, tasting it, breathing it, feeling it seep into the core of her being. A queer mixture of terror and exhilaration began to race through her veins. One half of her wanted to dart out through that closed door into the light and companionship of the street, and the other half fought with this craven self. A premonition of danger seemed to run and prickle just underneath the surface of her skin, as if some quicksilverlike fluid had been injected into her veins, and yet her brain kept repeating coolly:

"There's nothing to be afraid of. It's just an old, empty house. In the morning Mrs. Mackey will be back. In the

morning you'll go out and look for work. In the morning—"

The valiant thought broke and scurried for cover. The girl stood rigid in the middle of the hall, her eyes dilated and fastened on the knob of the front door. There had come, first, a little click, which had attracted her attention; and now the knob of the door was slowly turning, a very little, from side to side, as far as the lock would permit it to go.

She felt a queer stirring at the roots of her hair, an uncanny, animal-like twitching at the roots of her ears. She could see nothing else but this turning knob, for the door was of heavy oak, with no glass in it. Then, as she stood there, the door-bell rang. Its peal went through her like a knife-thrust. She started, and then laughed at herself.

"How silly to be so frightened!" she told herself. "It's Mrs. Mackey come back without a latch-key, or some one hunting a room. Come now, buck up!"

With her head up she went to the door and opened it; but even as she slid back the catch with one hand and turned the knob with the other, before she had really faced him, she knew that the person at the door was he of the beaky nose. This foreknowledge did not save her from the shock of his foot-thrust in the door and his glittering, black eyes boring down into her own.

"Mrs. Mackey, she is back now?" he demanded.

For the first time the girl caught a slight foreign inflection in his voice.

"No," she said faintly. Then she caught at her courage and added firmly: "She has not come back, and I do not know when she will come back. Good evening!"

She tried to close the door, but the man threw out a hand and held it open. He now stood with one foot over the threshold, smiling down at her evilly.

"You are her servant?" he said, with a note of insinuation in his voice.

The girl shook her head.

"No? Then I will come in and wait."

With a sudden sense of the empty rooms behind her, with a sense of her own helplessness, there came a panic-stricken conviction that she must keep this man out of the house, that if he got in she must get out. And there flashed through her mind a picture of Angie, lying down there on the couch in the basement kitchen, asleep, with the sooty kitten curled up beside her.

"You cannot come in!" she cried, her voice suddenly shrill with fear.

The man merely edged himself in a hand's breadth farther. He was not smiling now, but his lips curled back from his teeth in an ugly sneer. The girl threw all her weight against the door.

"I shall call the policeman!" she panted. "There is one at the corner. You cannot come in!"

"Be quiet, you little fool!"

Quite easily he began to push the door back, and the girl struggled in vain with her slender weight thrown against it. Her resistance seemed to light some sudden flare of anger in the man, for, giving the door an impatient push, he stepped into the hall and seized her arm.

"Shut up now!" he snarled. "Where is that woman?"

As he twisted her arm, the girl felt the world reeling around her, and yet she knew that she was going to fight to the last breath.

"I tell you I don't know!" she panted. "Let me go!"

She put forth all her strength in an effort to wrench her arm free. Then she fell back against the wall, for the man with the beaky nose had released her and had retreated, with a quick gesture of alarm, to the side of the door.

## VI

IN the doorway a newcomer stood. He was a tall young man of a quite evident muscularity, and there was about him an interested alertness, a sort of joyous readiness for anything that might come along. He glanced keenly from the girl to the man, and then back to the girl.



"This fellow bothering you?" he asked pleasantly.

In spite of his alertness, he managed to appear entirely casual. The girl struggled for self-control.

"He—he wanted to get in," she whispered breathlessly.

"And you wanted him to stay out?" the young man questioned.

The girl nodded.

"I see!" murmured the young man.

Turning, he looked the beaky-nosed man up and down with an impersonal inquisitiveness that made him shift uneasily from one foot to the other, although he obviously felt inclined to hold his ground. But with a sudden decision the young man stepped out of the doorway, made a single gesture toward the street, and remarked:

"You'd better get out!"

The beaky-nosed man hesitated a defiant instant, muttered an unintelligible word, and then slunk out of the doorway and down to the street. The newcomer looked after him with interest.

"Mongrel!" he remarked. "A little Spanish, a little Mexican, a little bad American. Quite a few of that type in San Francisco. Not so many here."

"Where is he going?" asked Marigold, with a quaver in her voice.

"Into the house across the street," the young man replied. Then he turned and looked at the girl with a friendly smile. "May I come in?" he inquired.

She made an obvious effort to pull herself together, but her lips were quivering, and he could see how the hand she lifted to her hair in the world-old feminine gesture was trembling. Without a word more he closed the front door, turned up the gas in the Moorish lamp, and pulled out from the wall the carved chair that had stood there since the house was built.

"Sit down a minute," he said quietly. "Where is there water?"

She made a gesture toward one of the vacant rooms. He disappeared. When he came back with a glass of water, she was sitting collapsed in her chair, her

head thrown back against the carved walnut.

The wan light from the Moorish lamp made her face look thin and ghostly and strangely young. He could see the faint blue shadows under her eyes and about her lips. Her hair in the lamplight was like a burnished aureole about her thin face. Not a detail escaped the young man with the inquisitive eyes; but when she looked up at him, those eyes were merely gray and friendly.

"All over now!" he said in his pleasant voice. "Drink this!"

She drank, sat up, and passed her hands lightly over her hair.

"I was more scared than hurt," she quavered, smiling up at him. "But if you hadn't come just then—"

"But I did!" he interrupted, seeing her lips beginning to quiver again. "What was our unpleasant friend trying to do?"

The girl drew a long breath.

"He has tried three times to-day to get in, on the pretense of wanting to see Mrs. Mackey. I have told him every time that she isn't here, and this last time he said he was going to come in and wait. I think he knows the house is empty. I don't know why I am so afraid of him; but even this morning, when he came the first time, I didn't like him."

"He's a predatory beast," said the young man calmly. "Haven't you a chain to that door? Never mind, I can see you haven't. Sit still!" He went to the door and made an examination of the locks. "Next time that bell rings, ask who it is before you open the door. You'd recognize his voice if you heard it again?"

"Yes," she said, and was aware of the first pleasant sensation she had had that dreary day.

For the first time in more than a year some one was thinking for her, some one was telling her what to do. She looked up at him gratefully and drew another long breath. The young man was regarding her thoughtfully.

"How long has the house been empty?"

It was only for an instant that she hesitated, but the young man was surprisingly quick. His hand went into his pocket and came out with a card, which he presented to her gravely. On the card she read:

FITZ-JAMES POWERS  
THE MORNING STAR

"You know," he remarked unsmilingly, "you would make a poor poker-player. Your face has too much expression in it, and you haven't got it under good control. You shouldn't tell strangers that this house is empty."

"But you're not—"

"Predatory? No! Lose my job if I were. Too busy, anyway. Only, you need a scolding, you know. In a city one can't—"

He stopped, taken aback, for she had covered her face with her hands and begun to make little smothered hysterical sounds. Alarmed, he bent over her.

"Good Heavens! You're not—"

She shook her head, still with her hands covering her face.

"I'm laughing!"

He stared at her in perplexed incredulity. Then he saw something that glistened and slipped down between two of the girl's pale fingers. It startlingly resembled a tear; but she was making no sound now—she was merely quivering.

The sight appeared to upset Mr. Fitz-James Powers. He took a step or two up and down; he looked from the dingy reaches of the hall to the dim stairs climbing up to darkness above; he sniffed the many-odored air, the air that proclaims to the initiated the exact rung of the ladder to which a house has descended. He muttered something under his breath that was not a polite exclamation.

After that he brought a chair and sat down in it opposite the girl. Leaning forward, he gently but firmly unclasped her hands from her face. The two looked at each other.

"You poor little thing!" said Mr. Fitz-James Powers under his breath.

"Don't pity me!" she cried, smiling crookedly. "I feel too sorry for myself as it is. I—I am beneath contempt. I—I've lost my nerve!"

"I can see that for myself," said Mr. Powers, recovering the admirable poise that he also had momentarily lost. "But what I want to know is why, and how. Come now—what are you looking for?"

"My—my handkerchief!" she sniffed, fumbling up each sleeve and in the front of the white shirt-waist. "I had it a minute ago, and now it is g-g-gone!"

"What's a handkerchief between friends?" the young man asked. "Take mine. Here's a clean corner. There! Look out, there's a tear you missed, right on the side of your nose. My! My! What a bungling job! Give me that handkerchief!"

And before she could quite grasp his intention he had taken the handkerchief from her, leaned forward, and deftly wiped away the last fugitive tear. As he did so his face was so drolly grave, so solicitous and intent, that suddenly the girl laughed aloud.

Not in years had the old hall's echoes trembled to such a peal of laughter. Her infrequent laughter was the most charming thing about the girl. It was high and sweet and silvery, and it was made up of the very essence of youth. It made one think of sunlight striking down through white birches, of brooks in spring-time, of the ecstatic whir of humming-birds' wings.

When she laughed, the thin, crimson line of her lips curved so whimsically that her whole face was transformed to something merry and mischievous and elflike. The thinness and paleness of it seemed to vanish, or, if one was still aware of them, to add a piquant charm to her laughter. Her eyes, usually too broodingly grave, crinkled up at the corners, and little lances of light danced in each of them challengingly.

The young man leaned back in his chair, looking at her, listening to her laughter, his own mouth whimsically

turning up at the corners. His manner seemed to say:

"I don't quite know what you're laughing at, but I like it!"

Into his hazel eyes, too, there came little challenging lances of light. The two again looked at each other, and the youth in each of them, giving the world-old countersign, came out to greet the youth, in the other. Not in twenty years, perhaps never before, had there taken place in that old hall so spontaneously joyous a meeting of two souls.

Not that they were quite aware of it, not that they could have put it into words; but from the moment when the girl laughed they spoke the same language, they belonged to the same club, they hailed from the same star. In the dingy shabbiness of that place something radiant and enchanting was coming to life. But what they said, after all, was commonplace and decorous.

"You are a reporter?" she questioned, holding the card up to the light of the Moorish lamp.

He nodded.

"At least, I was one when I left the office. I may not be one when I go back to it."

"But why?"

"Row with the city editor. Shocking row. Over the merest trifle. Want to hear about it?"

She nodded.

"You see," he began, "last night they sent me out to an old ladies' home to do a dinky false alarm. Furniture in one room burned up, you know, because one of the old ladies upset an alcohol-lamp. It seems alcohol-lamps are forbidden, but the old lady was heating water for a flax-seed poultice, and she absent-mindedly upset the lamp. It was a punk assignment! I couldn't say that the old lady sat down on the lamp, now could I? That wouldn't have been nice. But just to relieve the general prune color of the story, I did say"—he leaned forward and looked at her appealingly—"now, look here, do you think my city editor had

any right to go up in the air because I said that the old lady was mixing herself a good-night tom and jerry?"

"Oh!" His listener's mouth and eyes were round. "That was a reprehensible thing to do!"

The young man sighed.

"That's what Hop said—only not so politely. Of course it let us in for a little trouble with the superintendent of the home, but what of that? I didn't mention the old lady's name, of course. My conscience is light as a bird. But that isn't the point. If I don't go back to-night with a real, live, human-interest story—no fake, mind you!—I lose my job. And another bright hope is lost to the newspaper world. Also, I shall be the man in the street, painfully so, for my landlady's face"—he leaned forward earnestly—"say, does your landlady's face resemble a withered dill pickle when you owe her a week's rent?"

The girl leaned back in her chair and laughed again. A satisfied expression came into the young man's eyes. It was almost as if he had worked for that delicious sound.

"Ah!" laughed the girl. "Now there are four of us!"

He looked up and down the hall in alarm.

"Four of us!"

"Waifs," she returned.

"But I thought you said the house is empty?"

"It is—of everything but waifs."

There was a pause, during which Fitz-James Powers regarded the girl earnestly.

"Are you one?" he inquired.

The laughter died out of his voice and eyes. The girl's sensitive face also changed expression.

"Yes," she sighed; "or else I shouldn't be here, a lone mouse on a sinking ship."

"But you said there are four of us?"

"If you count Angela and the kitten. They're down-stairs now, asleep."

"And do you mean, honestly, no joking, that you, I, Angela, and the kitten are the only living beings in this house?"

The girl nodded.

"How did you happen to come here?"

Mr. Powers pushed back his chair and stood up.

"A lucky accident. Overheard a fellow by the name of Plevins—dances in a cabaret down-town—telling one of our cubs that the landlady of his house had disappeared and all the lodgers were leaving. He hinted at various things, and I hiked along up here on my own. Figured I'd get the story before the other boys or the police got on the job. Am I the first?"

"You're the first." She stood up wearily. "There's nothing to tell you. Mrs. Mackey was gone when we got up this morning, and she hasn't come back."

"But Plevins dribbled something about a child locked in a room, and about Mrs. Mackey's going out at three o'clock in the morning with a man."

"It's true about the child, but I don't know about the rest. I only know that she hasn't come back, and every one has left."

"Every one but you!" He was silent a moment, looking at her drooping face. "Why did you stay—if you don't mind telling me? I won't use it, you know," he added quickly.

The girl leaned on the back of the tall chair, staring down at her locked hands. There was something wistfully somber about her face now. At last she looked up at him slowly.

"I'd like to tell you. It's been a long time since I've talked to any one of my own kind."

She paused, scrutinizing him wistfully.

"Do you think I'm your own kind?" he asked gravely.

The light of the Moorish lamp struck down on his well-shaped head, his clean shoulders, and his clear eyes. She nodded, smiling gravely.

"I know it! A woman always knows."

Mr. Fitz-James Powers's sudden smile flashed out.

"Thank goodness, I think I am! Look here—we met in a queer kind of way, and

maybe you'll think I have nerve, but I'd like to know about you—how you happened to be here, you know. You're not the kind of girl one usually sees in such a place. I'd like to know about you, if you don't think I ought not to ask."

She smiled.

"Suppose we tell each other!"

"There's nothing much to tell about me," he returned, with a droll, rueful smile. "My father was a dean in a middle Western university, a gentleman and a scholar, who died without a penny. I've done a number of futile things, from working in Canadian wheat-fields to writing a play. The newspaper game has held me longest, but I guess the trouble with me is that I like to play around too well. Boning down to any one thing has never seemed worth while. I used to think that it was something to boast of, but somehow, when I come to talk to you about it, it doesn't seem so funny. I sound like a slacker, somehow, don't I?"

She shook her head, smiling her wistful, sidewise smile.

"I can understand, for I'm afraid I'm a sort of slacker, too. My father was a poet and an inventor, and he died as poor as yours. Poor daddy! He knew six languages, and he used to say that if he knew one more he wouldn't be able to pay the rent at all! When he died I was left absolutely alone, with only a few hundred dollars. I came to New York with a vague idea that my money would last until I could learn some trade. I went into a school of design, for I thought I had some talent along that line, and I worked—oh, but I worked! Then, toward the end of the first year, I began to understand that it was going to take a long while—much longer than I had expected—to get to the point where I could sell my work, and so I took a job."

"Yes," he prompted her, as she hesitated. "What kind of a job?"

"Cleaning out studios. Of course, it wasn't nice work, but you'd be surprised how many girls there are like myself in this town without any training or



experience—and how cheap they come! Then I fell ill late in the fall; I dropped behind in my classes at the school, I lost my job, and my money was slowly dribbling away. All winter I lived from hand to mouth, working when I could get anything to do, trying to keep up my interest and my belief in my future. At last I dropped down to the cheapest room in this deplorable house. For a long time, now, I've had no courage, no faith in myself. It is strange, for I used to have so much."

"It is not strange," he cried. "Why, this rooky old house would poison the spirit of any one on earth! And you've probably never recovered from that illness. What you need is good food, fresh air, and freedom from worry."

He came to a sudden pause, staring gloomily at the dingy carpet.

"Lord, what a blind fool a man is to waste himself!" he burst forth with seeming irrelevance. "But go on! You were going to tell me how you came to stay in this house when the others got out."

## VII

For a moment Marigold was silent, looking down at her hands and smiling a little, as if at her own thoughts. At last he had to prompt her gently.

"Come now, I'm waiting," he said.

"You'll think me a fool," she laughed.

"Yesterday I had eighty-three dollars, and to-night I haven't a cent."

"Whew! What did you do with 'em?"

"I spent them, every one of them, for a dress I saw in a window—a dress and a hat and boots."

"Do you mean that you spent all the money you had left—every cent of it—on clothes?"

She nodded, with her eyes fixed smilingly, and yet with a touch of anxiety, on his face. Fitz-James Powers whistled contemplatively under his breath. Then he took her elbow and gently made her sit down again.

"My child," he said whimsically, "you and I are so much alike that it scares me! Last week I had one hundred

and ten good dollars, and I spent them all on an edition of the 'Arabian Nights.' But wait! That isn't going to save you from a scolding. Why, what are you—a baby, an idiot, to do such a thing? Or have you some one to fall back on?"

"There isn't a soul in the world I would turn to for help."

Mr. Powers groaned aloud.

"The unspeakable folly of you! The infantile, grasshopper light-headedness!"

"But you—"

"I'm a man; but for a girl to be without a cent in this cast-iron world! Why did you do it?"

She flung back her head, and a crimson wave swept over her face.

"Because I was tired of being ragged and shabby!" she cried fiercely. "I was tired of seeing myself going about like *Cinderella* just out of the ashes! Look here, you don't know what it is to be so hungry for something nice to wear that your old clothes make you ill when you put them on! You don't know what it means to see them growing shabbier and dirtier and more bedraggled, in spite of all that you can do! And—and out of style! Yes, you needn't look so contemptuous—it's terrible to be out of style! I got to feeling furtive. It was hard to hold my head up and walk proudly when every mirror, every window, showed me dowdy, worn, out of date, with a ridiculous hat and patched shoes, and gloves mended to the limit. I—I who ache with hunger for beautiful things! I had to avoid the streets where well-dressed folks walked. I found myself slinking up and down mean streets. The shabbiness of my clothes seemed to get into my mind; it was grinding into my soul like the grime on these walls. And then one day I forced myself to go on the avenue. I passed a shop with only one dress in the window, but it called to me as the 'Arabian Nights' called to you. Next day I went by there again, and the next day. At night I dreamed of myself in that dress and hat and those boots. It was exactly my kind of a dress, my size,

color—everything! It seemed to me that if I could put on those things and walk just once up the avenue, I should recover the courage I had lost. And on the fourth day I went in and bought them. That was yesterday. When I came out of that shop I had a dollar and thirty cents left, and my room-rent was due to-day!"

"Good Lord!" breathed the young man. "What did you do then?"

The girl caught her lower lip with her teeth in a quivering smile.

"I may as well tell you! I walked up the avenue to the nicest tea place I could find, I went in, I had tea and thin sandwiches and cakes and an ice. I paid my bill with the dollar, and gave the waiter the thirty cents. Then I came home. I went to bed without any supper, but I was happy! It had been glorious—to feel equal to anything again, to know that when some one turned to look at me it was not with pity or scorn, but with admiration. I'd do it all over again tomorrow!"

She looked at him defiantly, and he stared back at her.

"Darned funny things—girls!" he muttered huskily.

"Do you think I'm—contemptible?" she said in a low voice.

He did not answer her directly. He merely looked at her; and a faint after-glow of the flush that had receded from her face swept over it again swiftly. For a moment both of them studied the half-obliterated pattern of the carpet. Then he looked up.

"Do you know, I'm scared for you!"

She smiled waveringly.

"You can't be any more scared than I am!"

"Oh, don't say that! Isn't there somebody you belong to, that belongs to you?"

She turned away and put the chair she had been sitting in back against the wall with a conclusive gesture.

"There isn't any one," she said. "I'm afraid you'll be late with your story, won't you?"

Mr. Powers shook himself out of an intent study of her face.

"I'm not going until I've seen Angela and the kitten, no matter how hard you hint."

She led the way without demur down the basement stairs to the catacombs below. Powers looked about him as they felt their way down the stairs and groped through the hall to the kitchen door.

"Awful houses they used to build in the black-walnut-and-horsehair period," he remarked. "Do you keep that door locked?"

"Rather! That is where the man with the nose first appeared this morning," she returned.

Powers immediately tried the lock of the area door.

"Wish I knew where he connects up! You have never seen him around here before?"

The girl shook her head and opened the kitchen door. On the old couch under the basement windows Angela and the kitten slept the sleep of the conscience-free and the weary. Angela's cheeks were faintly pink; her curls clung in little damp tendrils to her forehead. Most children are pretty when asleep, but Angela was enchanting.

"By Jove, if she's like her mother—" whispered Powers.

"But she isn't—not one tiny bit, except when she talks, and that's because children imitate so easily. Isn't she like a fairy child? See how dainty her little hands are!"

Young Powers bent over the sleeping child, a touch of awe in his face.

"Pretty tough on a little kid, being brought up in this sort of place! And now she's up against the orphan asylum, maybe. A lot of crooked deals in the world, but the worst is when they happen to children!"

"Yes!" sighed the girl.

She pulled the ragged shawl a little higher over the child's arm. Angela's eyes opened with the unhesitating snap of an accomplished doll's.

"I's hung'y," she announced. Then she took in the fact that a strange young man stood looking down at her, and her lips began to quiver. "I want my mommy!" she wailed.

With a divine gesture of tenderness the girl bent over and swept the child up to her breast.

"Poor little waif!" she soothed her. "Marigold will feed you and put you in bed, and you'll go to sleep and forget all the bad troubles of the day, and in the morning there'll be—there'll be the kitten. Oh!" She looked over the child's head at Fitz-James Powers. "Think of there being nothing but a kitten! Oh, life is terrible!"

"Sit down," he said, with a huskiness in his throat. "Sit down and cuddle her, and I'll find her something to eat."

### VIII

It was a queer little meal, and a half-hour curiously outside the realities of life that followed. Mr. Powers, of the *Morning Star*, expertly rummaging in a strange ice-box; Marigold, with her pale face and her brooding eyes, watching him in silence; Angela, leaning back in the girl's arms, contentedly waiting for what gifts the gods should provide; the sooty kitten blinking from the folds of Mrs. Mackey's old kimono on the couch; the dismal, subterranean room lighted by one melancholy gas-jet; the waiting, memory-laden silence of the old house—and something else that trembled and hung in the air, something that persisted in being hopeful, golden, young.

Powers whistled under his breath and addressed absurd remarks to the sooty kitten as he set forth what he could find in Mrs. Mackey's very sketchily furnished larder. The girl watched him in silence.

He was the first human being in what seemed to her half a lifetime who had stretched out a hand to her. In the inflection of his voice, in the way he took control of the situation, in his gaiety and quick thoughtfulness, in the way he said, "You poor little thing!" and looked at

her with his kind, shrewd, puzzled hazel eyes, there was something that stirred her, warmed her, and filled her with a queer tremulousness. It seemed to her too wonderful for words just to sit still and be waited on, and she accepted meekly a cup of strong, hot bouillon which young Powers handed her.

"Drink this," he said masterfully. "You look about as perky as a grasshopper after the first frost. You need food more than Angela does. Did you have any supper to-night?"

She told him yes, she had had supper from what she could find in the house—bread and bologna sausage and a banana.

"Ghastly meal!" said Fitz-James Powers. "Come here to your uncle, Angela, and be fed nice bread and milk!"

Just for an instant Angela hesitated. She looked up at the tall young man with a solemn, blue scrutiny in her eyes. Mr. Powers smiled ingratiatingly. Angela swayed toward him, drew back, and then surrendered suddenly and adorably, with a new dimple showing in her cheek and her arms put up to him. In spite of his tremendous *savoir-faire* Mr. Powers blushed with pleasure.

"Can't resist me!" he bragged, to hide his confusion. "My smile gets 'em every time!"

The waif at the other end of the table took up the gauntlet.

"It wasn't your smile, but the bread and milk. Don't be so conceited! She'll come back to me when she's sleepy."

They laughed happily. Angela stretched out a greedy pair of hands toward the spoon. Powers settled her on his knee.

"Now, then, little angel, go slow! Never bolt your food. Hi, look out there! Don't wriggle when a fellow aims a spoon at you! I say, ought she to gobble it down so fast?"

"You're feeding her," retorted the waif opposite, demurely.

"Jealous!" he taunted back.

They both laughed again. It was surprising how easily their laughter came,

how quick an understanding there was between them. The dingy basement kitchen had faded away; they saw only each other. Even Angela was a bit unreal to them, charming as they found her.

Presently the child leaned her head confidently back against the young man's arm and began telling him a long, complicated, and mostly unintelligible tale about the witch who lived in the coal-bin. And in a few minutes her voice trailed off, and Powers looked across the small table at the other waif with a touch of awe in his eyes.

"Is she asleep?" he whispered.

"Sound. Shall I take her?"

He shook his head.

"Doesn't bother me any," was all he said. "Funny little kid!"

But Marigold noticed that he refrained from moving the finger that Angie had grasped, and the curve of his arm adjusted itself carefully. A silence fell upon the two of them as they sat looking at the sleeping child.

Finally Powers glanced at the girl opposite him with a smile which was so unlike his care-free grin that she felt startled and moved.

"What was the Lord thinking of when he let her have—this?" He glanced down at the child in his arms. "What sort of person is Mrs. Mackey?"

"I can't tell you. She puzzles me a little. She has all the outward signs of being—well, not—not nice. She is large and flabby, and she wears an endless number of soiled kimonos and high-heeled slippers. At some time her hair has been bleached, but she has neglected it, and it has begun to turn mouse-color at the roots. She looks hard, and yet at the same time pitiful. Haunted, that's the word! I've always had the feeling about her that she has something on her mind. Maybe you'll think I'm fanciful, but I've imagined that when she's alone she always sits with her back to a wall."

"By Jove, I do get a picture of her! Tell me what happened before she disappeared."

The girl told him of the sounds she had heard in Mrs. Mackey's room the night before, and of the conversation Mrs. Henricus had overheard at the telephone.

"I'll bet our predatory friend was the one who telephoned her," Powers said. "She has disappeared to escape him."

"But who was the man whose voice I heard up there in her room last night? She was afraid of him, too, or rather she was trying hard to placate him."

"That's what I can't figure out. The second man sort of complicates things. But there's one thing I'm willing to bet on—I don't believe Mrs. Mackey will ever come back to this house. Women like that—well, things happen to them."

The girl involuntarily looked over her shoulder.

"You don't think she—that anything has happened to her?"

Powers caught the expression in her face. He stood up, moving very carefully, so as not to awaken Angie.

"Where do you want this infant put for the night?" he inquired cheerfully.

He noticed how reluctantly the girl followed his lead and stood, and also how pale her face had gone. He could read her thoughts as if she had spoken them. The mere prospect of a night alone in the old house was giving her the horrors. Over his shoulder he spoke casually:

"You can dig out some blankets for me, can't you? I'm going to bunk in the front hall, you know."

He saw the gratitude leap into her face, but she made her protest none the less. She would let him do nothing of the sort; what about his newspaper?

"I can't make you lose your job," she finished.

"Lost it already!" he grinned ruefully. "Old Hop always means what he says. For all practical purposes I'm fired."

"But you said that if you went back with a story—"

"My dear girl, that's just the point—I haven't any story to go back with!"

She spread out her hands in a little gesture.



"Couldn't you make a story out of my holding the fort with Angela and the kitten? I shouldn't mind."

Young Powers instantly became graver than she had imagined he could be.

"I'm sorry," he said stiffly, "that you think so badly of me as all that!"

"But I don't see—"

"Why, I couldn't use *you*! You and I are friends!"

Then for the second time since supper the girl laughed—not merrily so much as tenderly. Her head went back, and she gazed at him through crinkled-up eyes.

"You are nice!" she cried. Then her pale face suddenly flushed. She turned toward the door. "We'll put Angie up in my room," she said in a businesslike tone. "Do you mind carrying her up three flights?"

Angie's cot was brought out of Mrs. Mackey's room and placed alongside Marigold's.

"While you are putting her to bed," said young Powers, "I think I'll go down and do a little telephoning. You don't happen to know Mrs. Mackey's first name?"

"Selma. And once I heard her spoken of by some one in the house as Mrs. Malone Mackey."

"Right-o! You'll come down when the infant's tucked in?"

"Oh, yes, I'll come down."

Young Powers was sitting in the old carved chair under the Moorish lamp when she came down again. He was evidently in a brown study. He rose as she appeared, but even the gesture with which he motioned her to the armchair was absent-minded.

"You know, you were right when you had that feeling about Mrs. Mackey's having something on her mind," he said, leaning against the newel-post near her. "I've a good friend at headquarters—I've done police reporting mostly, and Ryan owes me a good turn, you see. So I got him on the wire, and he looked up something for me. They have the picture of a Malone Mackey in the gallery."

"Good gracious! Does he have a beaky nose and black eyes?"

"No; that's what puzzles me. Ryan says he's medium-sized, tough and wiry, with straw-colored hair—not a bit like our friend. But here's something interesting—this Malone Mackey has been doing time, and his term was up yesterday."

"Then he's the man whose voice I heard up-stairs last night!" Marigold cried. "I don't like that, do you?"

"Don't like it much, with you in the house," Powers admitted. "I've been thinking it over, and I believe you'd better let me notify them at headquarters of Mrs. Mackey's disappearance. They'll take charge, and you can get out quietly, without being mixed up in something that may be mighty unpleasant."

She looked up quickly.

"What would they do with Angie?"

"Turn her over to a police matron, probably. She'd be taken care of."

The girl sat in silence for a moment, a finger-tip pressed to her lips.

"When I tucked her into bed," she remarked irrelevantly, "she put up her arm in the oddest way. I couldn't make out for a long time what she wanted, but there was a dimple in her elbow, and I kissed it. She gave a little sigh of satisfaction and was asleep in a jiffy. That was all she wanted—to be kissed. Do you think the police matron would take time to kiss her, and listen to her story about the witch in the coal-bin? And then there's the kitten. They wouldn't let her have the kitten, would they?"

"Of course not!" returned Fitz-James Powers gruffly. "What nonsense!"

He took a turn down the hall and back, he fidgeted with the lock of the front door, and finally he stopped abruptly in front of the girl and looked down at her with a grin that tried to be derisive to hide how tender it was.

"You soft-hearted little thing!" he said. "What do you want me to do?"

It took a great deal of talking over, but in the end the girl gained her point.

Mrs. Mackey was to be given another twenty-four hours in which to come back; the police were not to be notified, and Marigold was to take care of Angie and the kitten another day. And all because Angie had proved, merely by expecting a dimple in her arm to be kissed, that Mrs. Mackey was not an altogether heartless mother!

"If she really wants to come back and start in again," said Marigold, "it would be too bad not to give her the chance. But if she comes back to find the reputation of her house spoiled by this thing's becoming public, and her child is given over to the police, why, what would become of her?"

"You're right," Powers admitted reluctantly. "I believe you're the kind of girl that is almost always right. But it is my duty to point out to you that we're laying ourselves open to a rather unpleasant interpretation if something should happen to start a police investigation independently of us. The police just naturally mistrust a person with your kind of initiative."

"I'm willing to take a chance," she smiled.

"Say 'we,'" he hinted.

"There's no reason why you should be dragged into it. I really wish you'd go back to your newspaper. I don't believe you've lost your job. I don't believe they'd deliberately discharge any one as—as—"

"As much of an all-around wonder as I am?" he interrupted, and they both laughed. "It surprised me, too. But I'm not going to argue with you. I'm going to roll up in some blankets on that old couch down the hall there. Then you can go to sleep in safety. Come now, where are those blankets?"

There was no gainsaying Fitz-James Powers when he had once made up his mind—that was evident. Together they found blankets and a pillow, and made the horsehair sofa as comfortable as possible. Then the girl turned toward the stairway. Standing on the lowest step,

she held out her hand to him over the banister.

"Good night," she said, smiling gravely. "I'm not going to thank you, because I can't. But you've saved me from—oh, I don't know how I could have stood the night alone in this house!"

"Thank God, you don't have to!" He took her hand. "You're not going to worry now, or be afraid of anything?"

"Not a worry! Not a fear!"

"Fine!" He appeared to be unaware that he still held her hand. "Well, I suppose you need sleep. You're quite sure you—you—" For the first time in his life his fluency failed him. He could think of no further excuse for standing there, holding her slender hand. "Well, good night, little waif!"

She moved a step or two up the stairs, and then leaned over the banister with a gravely radiant smile.

"But I'm not a waif any more. A waif is a person that hasn't either a penny or a friend. Good night!"

## IX

It was a long time before Marigold went to sleep that night. She leaned out of the dormer-window and felt the summer night air on her cheeks with a keenness of sensation that she had not known in months.

In three hours some mysterious change had come over the world. It was no longer cruel or frightening, but full of adventure, of a sweet sort of excitement, of human kindness, and of a tremulous expectancy which one could not explain, and to which one would not own up, anyway. Even the room in which she had been so depressed that morning was no longer sordid. It was merely a place in which she sojourned for a few hours on her way to something more wonderful than anything she had ever known.

When she crept between the sheets, she did not feel sleepy. She lay with her arms under her head, recalling words, gestures, the laughing flash of eyes, the fun, the pity, the quick understanding in them.

What had he said or done that was so noteworthy? Nothing! And yet she knew that she liked everything about him, that by some miracle the kind gods had sent to her a man of her own kind.

And just as she had done that morning, she sat up in bed to think the better. She looked around at the darkness of the narrow room, she pressed her hands against her breast in a sort of surprise.

"He likes me!" she thought. "I know it by the way he looks at me. He wouldn't let me stay alone here; he made me drink that bouillon; he called me 'poor little thing.' Me! And this morning I was alone, and in all this city there wasn't a friendly hand. Ah, it's not a bad world, after all!"

She must have lain down after this and gone to sleep; but it seemed to her that she couldn't have done so, for the next thing she knew she was sitting in the same position, only this time her attitude was tense, half crouching, listening. The sound that had awakened her, that had brought her up sitting, came from the next room. She recognized it beyond the shadow of a doubt. It was the tiny creak that the door of Mrs. Mackey's room always made when it was opened.

Moving with the greatest caution, she slipped out of bed and crept to the door between her room and Mrs. Mackey's. Leaning over the wash-stand, she put her ear close to the crack of the door; and then a queer, cold sensation streaked up her spine, for she had heard some one breathing on the other side of the door.

Whoever it was must have been standing very close to the communicating door. Even as she drew back, Marigold guessed the reason for this; for as she straightened up she caught the rustle of papers, and then the sound of a small drawer being slowly, cautiously opened. Some one was searching through the old desk that stood with its back to her door.

She told herself that there was no reason why she should be frightened, and yet there was something about all these minute sounds that turned her to ice.

Moving with painful care, she put on her slippers and a dressing-gown. Then she bent over the sleeping child. Angie was breathing softly and regularly. No danger from that quarter!

Then she crept to the door leading into the hall, slowly turned the key in the lock, slipped it out, opened the door, and peered out into the hall. The door to Mrs. Mackey's room was closed, but, as she stood there watching it, a tiny spurt of light ran under it. The person in that room had lighted a match, had held it for a moment, and then had let it go out.

Stepping into the hall, the girl closed her door noiselessly. She could not have explained why she locked it, but she did so, and, slipping the key into the pocket of her dressing-gown, she crept toward the stairs.

Up to this time she had made all her movements deliberately and coolly; but the instant her feet touched the stairs panic seized her. Like a child afraid of the dark, she flew down the two flights of stairs to the lower hall.

On the old horsehair sofa her protector, with a blanket wrapped about him, slept soundly and serenely; but the instant she touched him on the shoulder he was on his feet, his hand gripping her hand until he hurt her.

"What's the matter?"

"Some one in Mrs. Mackey's room!" she whispered back.

Fitz-James Powers deliberately disentangled his feet from the blanket.

"All right! I'll go up and look into this matter. No, you stay here!"

She was following him along the hall.

"But I prefer to go up with you," she said. "I'm not a bit scared now."

In the darkness she heard him chuckle softly.

"But I prefer to have you stay here," he retorted.

She had started to protest again, when he put a quick hand on her arm.

"Listen!"

They both stood still, elbow to elbow, listening.

"Some one coming down the back stairs," she whispered, putting her lips close to his ear.

In that old house the service stairway was an enclosed one, ending at the back of the long lower hall, and in order to reach the basement stairs a part of the lower corridor would have to be traversed. In the wall of the corridor, opposite the stairways, were three doorways, each of them deeply recessed.

With his arm thrown about her shoulders, Powers hastily drew the girl into the shadow of one of these doorways. It happened to be the middle one, almost directly across the hall from the top of the basement stairs.

They had scarcely gained this shelter when a figure moved down the hall from the foot of the back stairs to the top of the basement stairs. At that distance from the front door the hall was in a darkness so complete that they could only just make out a dark shape moving slowly, with infinite caution, toward them.

At the top of the basement stairs the dim figure paused. The slight click of a latch reached their ears, and then the door leading to the basement stairway was slowly opened. A gray light filtered up through the glass of the area door below. Marigold clutched her companion's arm.

"Mrs. Mackey!" she breathed.

The door to the basement stairs closed behind the figure of the landlady.

The two in the upper hall remained for a moment in astonished silence. They were so close in their doorway that they could feel each other breathing.

"What do you suppose she was after?" whispered the girl.

"Angie?" he suggested under his breath.

"No; she'd have made some sort of search for Angie. She must have come in by the basement way and gone straight up to her room by the back stairs. That's why she didn't wake you."

"Unless she's been there all the time," he suggested.

The girl shivered.

"What shall we do? I—I'm beginning to be afraid again!"

Powers tightened his arm around her shoulders.

"Nonsense! You are to stay right here, and I'm going down to interview the lady before she gets away."

He felt that she was going to protest, but before she could suggest any other procedure the decision was taken out of their hands by a sound that sent the blood tingling away from their hearts. It was a woman's scream, sharp, full of terror, and cut off short.

"Now we're in for it!" said Powers.

He pushed the girl aside and ran for the basement stairs. Without an instant's hesitation she followed him.

## X

AFTERWARD, when they were able to talk coherently to each other, they decided that the minute and a half following that scream was the nearest thing to a waking nightmare that either of them had ever known.

In the first place, what happened was taking place in almost complete darkness. The nearest arc-light was some distance down the street, and the light that came in through the curtained area door served merely to add a gray and ghostly confusion to the scene. And then there were the sounds that came up to them—snarling, gasping, panting sounds that seemed only half human, now and then a word jerked out, panted out; and above every other sound the desperate scuffling of feet on the bare floor.

Marigold's eyes, more accustomed to the dark basement hall, were the first to gather some idea of what was going on down there. Half-way down the stairs she whispered sharply:

"The man with the nose! He's got her!"

Young Powers said nothing. He merely cleared the last four steps in one leap. The girl saw him as he passed the gray square of the glass in the door, running with his head down. Then he became in-



extricably mingled with the darkness and the shifting, shuffling forms down there. She leaned over the banister, straining her eyes after him.

Mrs. Mackey's voice, gasping out disconnected words, could now be heard above the muttered oaths and cries that had added a touch of the grotesque to the confusion.

"I ain't got them, Jack! Ask Mark Ristein! Honest to God, I ain't got them, Jack! Honest!"

The panting words suddenly ceased, as if choked in the woman's throat. And then, piercing an instant's silence, came a scream.

"Don't kill me! Listen—ah!"

The girl could keep out of it no longer. Flying down the stairs, she darted into the open door of the kitchen. There were matches in a safe on the wall behind the gas-stove. Groping, she found them, and an instant later the flare of the kitchen gas-jet shot out into the hall.

Marigold ran out of the door into the hall. The first thing she saw was Mrs. Mackey standing just at the edge of the zone of light, with her back to the wall of the stairway. She was gray with fright, her dark jacket torn half off, her hair falling down on her shoulders. Marigold never forgot that picture of her, crouching against the wall, her light-blue eyes, enormous with fear, fixed on the two men who were fighting there in the middle of the hall.

The girl took one look at them. Young Powers was crowding the other man back against the wall. He must have thrown off his coat as he left her on the stairs, for she saw his muscular young shoulders straining under his thin, summer shirt.

And there was something else she saw in that incredibly crowded instant. The right arm of Powers's antagonist was pinned behind him, between his body and the wall; but as he struggled in the younger man's grip this arm freed itself a little, and Marigold saw the hand creeping around to the right hip, saw the flash of a knife whipped out with a single turn

of a wrist. Then her whole body became a fine wire spring, released, it seemed, by the cry of warning she uttered before she threw herself forward.

"The knife! Look out!"

In that instant the arm of the beak-nosed man had whipped itself up and over Powers's shoulder. It would have descended, beyond a doubt, and the knife, being in the hand of a craftsman in the art of noiseless self-defense, would in all probability have rested its point somewhere under the left shoulder-blade of young Powers.

But with one hundred and ten pounds of live weight suddenly launched upon it, this trusty arm came down not under Powers's left shoulder-blade, but just over the point of the shoulder. The knife came slithering down through the young man's shirt-sleeve, and then fell clattering to the floor. For a most surprising thing had happened—the one hundred and ten pounds of live weight hanging to the arm had taken a bite out of it! Just above the wrist, where the coat-sleeve had been thrust back by the struggle, two rows of strong and sharp little teeth met—and to his dying day the man with the beaky nose would carry the mark.

A surprise is sometimes equally disconcerting to both parties in a hand-to-hand fight. Young Powers, hearing the girl's warning scream and then feeling the tingling descent of the knife on his upper arm, instinctively dodged. He was back again instantly, but he had allowed the other man just time enough to get himself clear from the wall.

With the girl still clinging to his arm, the dark man's right knee went up after the fashion of the Parisian apache. Young Powers doubled up and received a left-handed jab on the point of his jaw that sent him reeling back.

At the instant when Marigold had given her warning scream, the woman crouched against the wall had started forward, wavered an instant, and then run toward the area door. It clicked behind her just as Powers reeled back before the other

man's blow. Nither he nor Marigold heard that sound, but the man whom Mrs. Mackey had called Jack heard it, whirled, hesitated for an instant, and then threw himself toward the door in pursuit.

Powers, recovering himself, started down the hall after the enemy, but Marigold threw herself upon him frantically.

"Let him go!" she gasped. "Please, please let him go! He has a knife—he'll kill you!"

The air of three o'clock in the morning blew in upon them from the open area door, cooling somewhat the hot blood in young Powers's veins.

"Hate to have him get away like this!" he muttered. "But if I chase him, I'll have the cops after me."

He paused, putting his hand up to his head uncertainly.

"Are you hurt?" Marigold quavered. "Oh, I know you're terribly hurt!"

Powers grinned wanly.

"My feelings are hurt, that's all, I guess. To think that I let a half-breed like him get away from me! It makes me tired. And I almost had him double-cinched! I—"

But he stopped abruptly, for Marigold, with a cry of dismay, had put out her hand and touched his left arm. He looked down at it and saw a thin thread of red soaking through his shirt-sleeve.

"Nicked me, by George!" he cried. "Here! Here, my dear, don't do that! Why, little girl! *Little girl!*"

For Marigold, the intrepid, had reeled back against the wall with closed eyes.

When she opened them again, which was not more than two minutes later, she was lying on the couch in the kitchen, and Powers was sprinkling water in her face. Also he was lavishing endearing words upon her with a wildness that showed how thoroughly frightened he was. Later he explained the endearing terms by saying that in the stress of the moment he had not been able for the life of him to think of her name.

"What I can't understand," said Powers, when Marigold was sitting up and

drinking the cup of strong tea which he had insisted on making for her, "is why our friend didn't stick that knife in my back."

Marigold flushed and looked self-conscious.

"Why," she admitted, "I think I bit him!"

"You—you bit him?"

"I'm afraid I did. It is dreadful what one will do when one gets excited. I didn't know it was possible to feel so—so fierce!"

Powers looked as if he wanted to whistle and couldn't. He gazed at her with intent eyes for a moment, and again she saw that touch of puzzled awe in them that had been there before.

"So *that* was it!" he said at last. Then, after another pause, he added: "Do you know, you are wonderful!"

But Marigold shook her head and reminded him that she had fainted, and that she was afraid of the dark. Then, to change the subject, because of the strangely serious expression in his face, she began to talk about the attack on Mrs. Mackey.

Any one could figure out that the beaky-nosed man had seen the landlady come in, had waited just outside the area door, and then, when she opened it to leave the house, had sprung upon her. But why? What had she done? What was she to him? And who was he?

"She's got something he wants, or he thinks she's got it," said Powers.

"Did you ever hear of Mark Ristein?"

Young Powers got up and began to pace the kitchen floor.

"Over on the East Side there's an old fellow by that name who runs a pawnshop. At headquarters they have a suspicion that it's a fence, but they've never been able to catch him with the goods. He's a clever old spider! What's your theory?"

"Mrs. Mackey wasn't lying when she begged that man to ask Mark Ristein. She was fighting for her life, and I believe that whatever she had that the man with

the nose wants, your pawn-shop man has got it!"

"You're a good little guesser," said Powers. "But tell me this—why did she come back here? What was she looking for up there in her room?"

"If Mrs. Mackey were a different sort of woman, I should say that she came back to see her child, or to take her away. But it looks to me as if she came straight up to her room, made a search for something in the old desk, and then started to leave the house again. She's a queer sort of mother, that's all I can say!"

"She's in a peck of trouble," young Powers added thoughtfully. "Suppose we go up to her room. Maybe we can pick up some sort of a clue."

"When we've attended to that arm of yours," replied Marigold.

The shirt-sleeve was rolled up, and the long, deep scratch received first aid—an operation somewhat prolonged by the patient; after which they lowered the gas and went out into the hall. They were feeling their way toward the first step of the basement stairs when Powers stooped with an exclamation and picked up a long envelope.

"Let's go back to the light a minute and look at this," he said.

## XI

A MINUTE later the two of them were standing in the middle of the kitchen floor under the flaring gas-jet, staring at each other with amazement in their eyes.

"Do you think," gasped the girl at last—"do you think this is what she came back for?"

"Sure of it! She must have had it in her hand and dropped it when our friend of the nose attacked her."

"But—but what—why—"

"I know just how you feel," laughed Powers; "for that's the way I feel myself. This thing is getting beyond us! Sit down. Now, then, let's look at this paper once more."

Sitting side by side on the old couch, they bent their heads over a document

that bewildered and astonished them more the more they puzzled over it. To any other eyes than theirs it might not have appeared extraordinary; for it was merely a birth certificate.

"This is to certify," read Fitz-James aloud, "that on March 10, 1912, a girl named Angela Selma was born to Richard Stuyvesant Poindexter and his wife, Mary Jerome Poindexter—" He stopped abruptly. "Jumping Jerusalem!" he exclaimed.

"I can't see," Marigold interrupted, "why she came back for this, when she evidently had to come back with such secrecy. If she cared so much about a mere birth certificate, why didn't she try to get her child? Why didn't she—"

"Hold on a minute," cried Powers. "There's something on the outside of the envelope."

With excited fingers they held the envelope up to the light again. On the outside of it was written:

Given to Selma Jerome Mackey by her sister, Mary Jerome Poindexter.

And underneath was scrawled in pencil:

Mary died at 5 A.M., March 10, 1912.

"Given to Selma Jerome Mackey by her sister," Powers repeated; and then he suddenly threw both arms into the air. "Why, then—why, then—don't you see what it means? *Angie isn't Mrs. Mackey's child!* She's—look here"—he spread out the certificate and pointed to the second line—"she's Mary Jerome Poindexter's child, and Mary was Mrs. Mackey's sister, who died, it appears, when Angie was born."

Marigold's eyes were wide and very brilliant with bewilderment.

"Oh dear, I don't follow you at all! Aren't you jumping at things?" she wailed.

"Stupid little thing!" he laughed excitedly. "Don't take my word for it—just follow this document. On March 10, 1912, a girl, Angela Selma, was born. How old would you take Angie to be?"

"Just about four," said Marigold.

"Good!" Powers resumed: "'Was born to Mary Jerome Poindexter and Richard Stuyvesant Poindexter—'"

"Oh, oh! I've got an idea!" Marigold interrupted. "The dark man is Angie's father, trying to get her back!"

Powers put down the birth certificate and looked at his companion with scorn.

"Use your brain, child, use your brain! Did that half-breed look to you like a Richard Stuyvesant Poindexter?"

She obeyed instructions, and then admitted meekly that the man with the beaky nose could never by any stretch of the imagination be mistaken for a Stuyvesant Poindexter. And besides, Mrs. Mackey had called him "Jack."

"Well, then, what's the answer? He isn't Richard. And, by the way"—Powers came to a full stop, his keen eyes fixed with a far-away look on the yellow flare of the gas-jet—"by the way, where have I heard that name before?"

He sat with his elbow on his knee and his chin in his hand so long that at last Marigold jogged him with a question:

"Can't you think where you've heard it?"

"It's gone!" he sighed. "A reporter has more funny tag-ends of information tucked away in the folds of his gray matter than he can ever use, but this particular tag-end is in the wrong file. I can't put my finger on it. But maybe it'll come back. Well, my dear *Watson*, what next?"

She rose and went silently up the basement stairs. As they came down the hall, Marigold pointed to the fanlight over the door.

"The dawn!" she said. "You must go out to the nearest doctor and have that arm properly dressed."

"Feels all right," he protested.

They faced each other once more at the foot of the long, bare flight of stairs leading upward. The gray light that filtered in through the dusty fanlight showed her face white and elfishly thin.

"Queer thing," he said abruptly, "your eyes are bigger than your face.

You're going up-stairs now, to go to sleep again. And you're not to worry—this time no one will get by me."

She shook her head.

"I've been thinking, these last few minutes. You must go on your own way. It is morning, and I'm not afraid now. You have your own work, your own self, to think of; you can't spend any more time on this affair. It is just sordid and unprofitable. I want you to go, now. I shall call the nearest police-station. They'll take Angie, and I"—she made a little, tired gesture—"I'll drift along somewhere else."

She was standing on the lowest step, and this position brought their eyes on a level. Under hers were faint violet rings, and in his an expression so strange that her gaze clung to his, wistfully questioning. All his light jocularly, his slanginess, his mask of casual gaiety, had fallen from him. Slowly he took both her hands, folded them against his breast, and held them there.

"You little thing," he whispered, "so brave and sweet—you hurt me, somehow! Do you think I could go on now and leave you to drift? Do you think I could ever forget this night? How could I ever sleep again, thinking of you drifting, thinking of the things that might be happening to you? Thinking—"

His voice broke; he dropped her hands and turned away from her sharply.

"It's a damnable world!" he said huskily.

Instantly her two hands flew out to turn him about and make him face her.

"It is not! It is not!" she cried. Her head was thrown back passionately, the loosened braids of her hair fell on both sides of her face, narrowing it to a thin oval. A flame was in her face and in her wide eyes. "It is a wonderful world. Why, there's pity in it! Don't you see? Yesterday I believed there wasn't even that. It seemed to me the world was as hard as iron, and there was no place in it for me. But now I—"

"Yes?" he prompted her.



"I've got something to remember."

"Is that all—just something to remember? Can't you say you have something to look forward to?"

He reached up and took her hands from his shoulders, holding them fast again.

"Do waifs ever have anything to look forward to?" she smiled.

There was silence as he considered the question. She saw that slowly the eager, boyish expression in his face faded out, and in the place of it came an older look, grimmer and stronger.

"The man that couldn't save you from being a waif," he said slowly—"the man that wouldn't give his right hand to do it, isn't—well"—he paused, and the smile she had already come to watch for flashed out in his face—"he hasn't my middle name!"

She laughed softly, joyfully.

"You, too, are wonderful!" she said under her breath. And then aloud: "But you're going to do what I asked you—have that arm attended to, and then stop bothering with me and this drab-colored mystery."

He assumed a lordly air.

"I'm going to send you up-stairs to bed, and then I'm going to attend to my own affairs in my own way. Now will you be good—what?"

She dropped him a deep curtsy.

"I'm going—but don't say I haven't advised you well, anyway!"

## XII

It was four hours later when she came down the stairs again, this time leading Angie. Angie was in fine fettle. Having "dweamed a dweam," she was telling Marigold all about it in a high, sweet voice. There had been a few tears shed when she first awakened and found Marigold in the next bed instead of the woman she called "mommy," but she had been easily diverted with conversation about the sooty kitten, and now her flowerlike little face was beaming.

Marigold herself did not appear unhappy. In fact, as they descended to the

first floor, she peered over the banister as eagerly as if she expected to find some one in the hall below.

But the hall was empty. There was nothing unusual about it except a neatly folded pile of blankets on the horsehair sofa.

The girl's face fell. She lost the thread of Angie's remarkable tale, and she walked so fast toward the basement stairs that Angie was obliged to twinkle her plump little legs in order to keep up. But halfway down the stairs the disturbed expression of Marigold's face gave way to a smile. She sniffed the air.

"Coffee!" she murmured. "Oh, Angie dear, I didn't 'dweam' him!"

A remarkable transformation had taken place in the dismal kitchen. A white cloth had replaced the checked red one, a bowl of flowers stood in the middle of it, the table was set for three, and there were fruit and little fresh rolls and golden butter and cream. Young Powers turned around from the gas-stove with a sizzling frying-pan in his hands.

"Morning! Half a second later, and this omelet would have been a wreck. I have fed the kitten. There is nothing for you to do but sit down and eat. I said 'eat,' not 'talk.' Sure, the flowers are all right, but this omelet will be nicer. There, that's for you, and this is for Angie, and this is for me. Now you may pour me some coffee."

It is highly probable that never in the history of the old house was so merry a breakfast eaten, certainly never one that seemed more perfectly satisfactory to the breakfasters. It was decided that not until the last crumb was eaten should any of their numerous problems be discussed; but when the dishes had been washed, and the kitchen had been restored to its usual appearance, and Marigold had pinned one of the pink carnations to her white shirt-waist, then they faced the necessity of doing something, and doing it immediately.

This time it was Marigold who was in favor of notifying the police, and Powers

who demurred. There was something he wanted to find out for himself before the police took a hand. He had been doing some thinking while he had done their marketing, and in his head he declared he had the glimmer of a plan.

"But I'll have to go down to the office and look in the morgue," he said.

"The morgue!" Marigold gasped.

"Goose! Don't you know that every newspaper has a morgue—a filing-cabinet where they keep clippings about everybody of any prominence in the world? I want to find out something about Richard Stuyvesant Poindexter."

In the end it was decided that they should all go. Marigold did not care to be left alone in the house, any more than Powers cared to leave her there, and so they set out, each of them holding a hand of the delighted Angie. Down Sixth Avenue they walked, happily unaware that they looked like a nice young husband and wife showing the baby the sights.

As they reached the corner of Bryant Park they met three of Powers's fellow "cubs." The three stared; three wide grins appeared; their hats came off in three bows of pleased surprise. Powers hastily dropped Angie's hand. Marigold, who had missed nothing of this little comedy, glanced up at her companion, and her face was only a shade less flushed than his.

"I—I think Angie and I had better wait for you on one of these benches," she said hastily.

"As you please," returned Powers nonchalantly; but he hastened to cross the street. "I sha'n't be gone ten minutes."

He was gone so long, however, that Marigold was beginning to feel uneasy when she saw him come charging back under the clanging elevated railway. Even at that distance she could tell that he was excited, and she unconsciously sat up and braced herself for what might be going to happen next. She saw that he was waving a newspaper in one hand and his hat in the other as he crossed the little park.

"I know now why she came back for that birth certificate last night!" he cried before he had reached the bench.

Marigold opened her eyes wide.

"Really! Do you?"

He threw himself upon the bench.

"I've found out oodles of things." He jerked his head toward Angie. "Can she understand?"

Marigold offered Angie one of the biscuits she had brought to pacify that young person if she should get hungry, and suggested that she might feed it to the sparrows. When she was safely out of ear-shot young Powers leaned toward Marigold.

"Pardner," he said in an excited undertone, "we've stumbled upon something almost too good to be true!"

"Tell me! Begin at the beginning!"

"In the first place, I've found out who Richard Stuyvesant Poindexter is. Ever heard of Peter Poindexter, the millionaire paper-manufacturer?"

"He isn't Richard's father, is he?"

"No, but he's Richard's grandfather. What do you think of that?"

"But—but maybe you're wrong. Maybe our Richard isn't Peter Poindexter's Richard. Maybe—"

"Maybe! But I'm almost dead sure I'm right. I've been digging since I left you. According to a story which I dug up, but which seems to have been pretty well forgotten, about five years ago Richard Poindexter made a secret marriage with one of the Jerome girls. Old Jerome conducted a rather famous road-house over in New Jersey, and he had two daughters."

"You didn't find out their names?"

He nodded triumphantly.

"Old Pop Richardson in the city room used to know that road-house, and he knew Jerome, and he says the youngest girl's name was Mary. She evidently made a dent in his sophisticated heart, for he says there was more than one mourner when Mary disappeared. She was as pretty as they make 'em, Pop says. He has an idea she eloped, but no one

knew with whom, at the time. Never, never again"—he addressed the sparrows—"can any one tell me that romance is dead!"

Marigold gazed at him with big eyes for a speechless moment.

"Peter Poindexter's grandson! My word! Then that makes Angie—"

"Wait a minute! I've kept my big news for the last." He unfolded the paper. "I didn't see the late edition last night, or I should have known this earlier. My dear, Richard Stuyvesant Poindexter, Angie's father, died yesterday afternoon!"

Marigold's gaze leaped to the little figure solemnly playing beside a fountain. The child, in her cheap, befurbished clothes, had all at once become the central figure in a fairy-tale so breath-taking that Marigold could only sit and stare.

"Poor little orphan!" she said. "What will become of her?"

"Become of her! Why, she's in line for a whacking fortune, that's all! Don't you see? Richard Poindexter was the only grandchild, and now he's gone. That's why Mrs. Mackey came back for the birth certificate last night. She saw the newspapers, and she knew that that bit of paper had suddenly become a valuable asset. She probably figured that Richard's grandfather would pay big for a sight of it—and of Angela. She couldn't get away with the baby easily, and so she took the certificate, figuring that some one would take care of Angie, and that the child would be safe until it was necessary to produce her to-day."

"I begin to see," said Marigold. "And I don't like the responsibility. Suppose they are searching for Angie now! It makes us look like kidnapers, doesn't it?"

A thoughtful pause, during which they both looked at their charge with a certain amount of dubiety. Then Marigold exclaimed:

"I propose that we take her straight to Mr. Peter Poindexter and tell him the whole story."

"We could," said Powers thoughtfully; "but it's a queer kind of story we have

to tell him, and what's to prevent him from turning around and having us gathered in as a suspicious pair of impostors? We've got Angie and her birth certificate, but how are we to prove that they go together? Angie might be any little gutter-bird, and we—you named us once before—we're just waifs. No, I want to get more proof, I want to get hold of a link or two more, before I breeze up to Peter Poindexter with an heiress to the Poindexter millions in my pocket!"

At these last words Marigold sprang up and gathered Angela to her, as if danger lurked behind every tree in Bryant Park.

"It's so wonderful that it can't be true," she cried; "but somehow it makes me feel all jumpy inside. What shall we do next?"

Young Powers stood still for a moment in deep thought, his hat pushed back, his lips puckered. Then he jammed his hat down over his eyes and sprang up.

"Come on, family! We're going to take the subway up-town, then the ferry, and then a street-car. After that we're going to find the road-house where Richard Poindexter met this pretty Mary Jerome; and after that—we'll see!"

### XIII

EVER after, for these two, that journey by subway and ferry and suburban car held the tang of true adventure, oddly mingled with touches from the world of sordid reality. The adventure lay in the fact that they were taking a journey into the unknown together—a fact that transformed even a subway ride into a joyous interlude. The touch of sordid reality came when they had finally found the old Jerome road-house.

It had once been a rambling farmhouse standing well back from the main road, secluded in its green fields, and glimpsing the Hudson through a thick grove of maple-trees. But now, what with trolleys and automobiles, the green fields had shrunk to a trodden dooryard about the old house, and the maple grove had

been thinned so that no passer-by should miss the beer-signs that glittered and swung from the trellised porches.

The place was well located for patronage, but it did not appear particularly well kept up. At that hour of the day there was a somnolent, waiting air about the empty verandas. Droning flies were the sole occupants of the dining-room through which Powers led Marigold and Angela to a table on a trellised porch.

They ordered sandwiches for themselves and bread and milk for Angie. The waiter that brought them this meager refreshment looked like a withered old grasshopper; he had all the earmarks of having been a waiter through several incarnations. That he had kept even the slightest interest in eating and drinking human beings was remarkable, and yet there remained in his filmy old eyes a spark of humanity that did not escape the observing eye of Fitz-James Powers.

There was a likable, casual kindliness about young Powers that often got him what he wanted without his having made an effort. Thus, before their luncheon was finished, the old waiter had discussed with his customers many subjects, from the temperature of Angie's glass of milk, and the necessity of feeding the young most carefully, to sunsets on the Hudson. It was, therefore, quite natural for Powers to remark presently:

"Good location for trade, I should say. Does old Jerome still keep this place?"

"Oh, no, sir!" The old waiter appeared surprised that any one should be so ill informed. "Mr. Jerome gave up this place four years ago."

"Is that so? What became of him?"

"I couldn't say for certain, sir, but I understood that he bought a place near Detroit. Business fell off here when so many other road-houses sprang up right near. It ain't what it used to be in Jerome's time. Will you have some ice-cream for your little daughter, sir?"

Marigold rose up hastily.

"She's had all that's good for her, I think. We'll go out and look at the roses

while you finish your cigarette," she added to young Powers, but avoiding his eye.

A mischievous twinkle was in Fitz-James's eyes.

"Very well, dear," he said, elaborately husbandly.

The old waiter followed Marigold's slender figure with his eye. Then he most unexpectedly made a quaint bow.

"I must congratulate you, sir!" he murmured.

It was some twenty minutes later when Powers joined Marigold under the maple-trees. Angela roamed through the grass, fascinated to the point of awe by her first country visit. In one hand she grasped a bouquet of dandelions, and in the other a feather discarded by one of the many hens that clucked about the place. Her ecstatic little face was powdered with the fine gold of buttercups.

"She ought to live in the country," said Marigold, as Powers dropped on the grass beside her. "It takes so little to make a child happy! She has a better color already."

"So have you." Powers plucked a blade of grass and brushed it over the back of Marigold's hand. "The waiter congratulated me."

Marigold withdrew her hand.

"Is that all the waiter said to you? I could see you talking and talking in there like two old chums. Was he telling you about Mary, or were you discussing the European war?"

"No, we weren't discussing the European war!" Powers mimicked her. "In all these long years you've known me, haven't you found out that I never let the grass grow under my feet when I'm after a thing? Now, if you're properly squelched, I'll tell you what I learned."

"I'm very good now," she declared meekly, her eyes dancing.

"You're very pretty!" said young Powers softly.

"You're very irrelevant! We were talking about Mary Jerome, I believe."

"All right, if you bar out all really interesting discussion on the side!" He



sat up and pointed to a distant meadow beyond the house. "Do you see that group of tall elm-trees? Well, beyond those trees there is a little grass-grown road, not much more than a lane. It leads around through the field to the back of the house, and it was down that lane that Dick Poindexter used to drive his car of an evening. It was up that same lane that he and Mary Jerome slipped away one night, and they never came back again. Whether they were married the old chap in there doesn't know, but he believes they were. It is plain what *he* thought of Mary. 'A beauty, sir, and a good girl in spite of everything'—that's the way he puts it. He remembers the night Mary ran away. Old Jerome closed up the house and smashed fifty dollars' worth of glassware, though he might have foreseen what was coming, with a gay young chap like Poindexter forever turning in at the lane up there. And a week after the report of Mary's death her father sold out and disappeared. I guess the old pirate had a heart, in spite of the reputation of his house."

"But did the waiter say anything about Angie? Do you think he knew?"

"Don't believe he did. It seems that Selma also left soon after Mary did. She and her father were always quarreling, and Selma never came back. The waiter believes that she went to Chicago. She wasn't popular in the way that Mary was. 'A schemer'—that's the way the old fellow described her."

Marigold nodded.

"She was that kind of woman, all right; and yet don't you think she must have had a bit of good in her somewhere, to take her sister's child and bring her up, even as badly as she was doing?"

"It was either that, or else she was holding on to the child because she knew that when Richard Poindexter died his daughter would be heir to the Poindexter money. Of course, she might have restored the child to his grandparents four years ago—but there again, we can't

make any kind of a guess, because we don't know Richard Poindexter's side of the story. I only know from what I could dig up at the office that Dick was forever in disgrace with his family, and was disinherited periodically. Selma, being shrewd in her way, might have been waiting for a reconciliation between Richard and his grandfather before she made her appearance with Richard's child. At any rate, something happened to her, just as something inevitably happens to women of her type; and whatever it was, it came at a very inopportune time."

A silence fell between them. Their eyes strayed toward Angela, playing solemnly and happily, all unaware of the change in her fortunes the last two days had promised to bring about.

"Whatever happens to the child," said Marigold wistfully, "she'll never be any happier than she is at this moment. What a queer world it is! I wish—"

"What do you wish?" he prompted her.

"I wish I never had to go back to the city, to that house!" she cried, her face flushing suddenly. "It is so peaceful here, and I am so tired—" Her voice broke.

"So tired of mean streets," he finished for her, "and of sordid human failures? Child, don't you think I know how battered and bruised you feel? But look here, it's going to be different from now on. You and I—"

"But you don't know anything about me! You don't know how lethargic and cowardly I had grown. You don't know what a failure I've made!"

He took the hand with which she was pulling up grass-roots and tossing them nervously away from her.

"I don't want to know," he said gently. "I've seen you under fire, so to speak, and I think—of course, I admit I'm a little prejudiced, maybe; but I think you're the most wonderful girl I have ever known. Come, now"—he pulled her up to her feet—"we're going back to town, we're going to straighten

out this affair of Richard and Mary Poindexter, and then—now, look me straight in the eyes, chin up, chest out—then we're going to stop being waifs. I've got a new leaf to turn over as well as you. And at this moment"—he looked down at the hand he held—"at this moment I could lick the world!"

#### XIV

As they turned once more into the street of shabby rooming-houses and came within sight of No. 93, an unpleasant surprise awaited them. On the narrow front stoop, leaning against the iron railing and serenely swinging his club, was a very large policeman. In spite of his indifferent placidity, he had seen them first, and as they drew back, hesitating between advance and flight, he moved down the steps toward them.

"Was you thinkin' of comin' in?" he inquired pointedly.

Fitz-James Powers admitted that No. 93 was their objective.

"Then I place yez under arrest, pendin' investigation," remarked the officer calmly.

Marigold made a sound of dismay, but young Powers shook his head at her.

"It's a mistake, that's all. We'll straighten it out in a minute."

He took the key that Marigold handed him, and the three of them, with Marigold leading the round-eyed Angela, went into the house. In the hall, already beginning to darken with the shadows of the late afternoon, Powers handed his card to the officer, and, after a few minutes of persuasive conversation, received permission to make two telephone-calls. The first one was for Inspector Ryan at police headquarters. The second made Marigold catch her breath. It was a call for Mr. Peter Poindexter.

After a certain amount of argument over the wire with a servant and a secretary in turn, Powers turned away with a gleam in his eyes.

"He's coming down here himself!" he cried.

"But I never can keep Angie awake till he comes," returned Marigold, looking down at the tired head pressed against her shoulder.

"Put her to sleep on the couch there," Powers suggested.

And thus it happened that half an hour later, when Angela's future destiny, in the form of a tall, very tired old gentleman, stepped out of a glittering limousine and knocked at the door, Angela herself was deep in dreams of daisy-pied fields, and entirely indifferent to the fact that she was about to be tapped on the shoulder with a magic wand.

The old gentleman himself looked as if his dreams for years had been anything but happy ones. Followed by a secretarial young man, he came up the steps of the house slowly, and, when the door was opened to him by the officer, stood peering into the hall eagerly but suspiciously.

It was plain that he would not have crossed the threshold if it had not been for the presence of the man in uniform. Even when he had been respectfully invited to step inside by the now thoroughly mystified officer, he signified his distrust of the situation by standing on the door-mat and glaring from one to the other of the three faces with what seemed to Marigold a pitiful attempt to hide the emotions that were almost overpowering him.

"Now, then—now, then!" he said sharply to the secretary. "Find out what these people want!"

Marigold made an impulsive gesture toward the old carved chair against the wall.

"Won't you please sit down?" she said pleasantly. "It is a long story, and you will be tired."

"Haven't come here to listen to any long stories," Peter Poindexter began gruffly.

Then, as if aware for the first time of the sex of the speaker, he removed the old-fashioned top hat that he wore. His eyes, still very bright and shrewd in

spite of the film of age in them, explored the girl's face hungrily.

Marigold had moved forward, and the late afternoon light fell on her through the fanlight over the door. It must have revealed to Mr. Poindexter something that he had not expected to find in his dubious quest, for suddenly he moved toward the chair and sat down, his eyes still fixed on the girl's wistful face.

"Where is the man who telephoned me?" he demanded, but a shade less gruffly.

Powers moved forward. He explained that he himself had telephoned.

"You see," he said, with his disarming, friendly smile, "I had to ask you to come to us, because we couldn't go to you. Officer Clancy, here, thinks we're suspicious characters, and we're under arrest."

The old man started to rise, every line of his gray face showing the sickening sense of disappointment that had struck him harder than even Marigold could appreciate.

"So you're making use of me to get you out of some kind of scrape!"

"No! No!" cried Marigold and Powers at once.

"Officer," demanded the old man, "why did you arrest these persons?"

Clancy made an involuntary gesture which indicated that if he had not caught himself in time he would have scratched his head.

"I arrested him, sir, because my orders was to watch this house and hold every wan pendin' an investigation. That come from headquarters, sir. These two was the first to come along, so I gathered them in."

The old gentleman stood up.

"Don't like the look of it! Argyll"—he turned to his secretary—"we'd better be moving along. Nothing here for us!"

But Argyll had been studying Marigold's face with a pair of cool, gray eyes.

"I wouldn't be in a hurry, sir. Suppose we just hear a bit of the young lady's story. I think it's very likely that

Officer Clancy will step into that room across the hall while we hear what she has to say. We'll give him our word not to let his prisoners escape."

Clancy, looking rather sheepish because the affair had got so far beyond him, obligingly strolled into the front room. Peter Poindexter sat down again, his hands nervously clasping and unclasping over the head of his heavy stick, and the secretary looked straight at Marigold.

"Suppose you begin at the beginning," he said, smiling.

## XV

LONG before the end of Marigold's story the old man was leaning forward, his eyes gleaming with repressed excitement, his hands shaking on the head of the stick. When the birth certificate was handed him, he made one attempt to read it, and then passed it over to Argyll.

"Light's too poor," he muttered. Argyll read aloud:

On March 10, 1912, a girl named Angela Selma was born to Richard Stuyvesant Poindexter and his wife, Mary Jerome Poindexter—

At this point the old man gave up any further attempt at stoicism. He leaned back in the chair and closed his eyes, in which the difficult tears were rising.

When Marigold and young Powers between them had finished telling of Mrs. Mackey's disappearance, of her return, of the fight in the dark, and later, of their visit to the Jerome road-house, the old man appeared to rouse himself from a painful reverie. He looked from one excited young face to the other, and then his eyes went past them down the length of the dreary hall. It was plain that a moment he had been dreading, and yet longing for, had arrived.

"The—the little girl!" he whispered. "I'd best see her now."

Marigold disappeared down the basement stairs. In a very few minutes they heard her coming back again, murmur-

ing cheery and reassuring words to the drowsy young person she carried in her arms. Old Peter Poindexter averted his eyes, as if to postpone as long as possible the moment when he must put to a vital test this story to which he had been listening. Marigold came down the hall and stopped opposite his chair.

"She's a dear little child," she said softly. "You'll love her, if you let yourself!"

The old man slowly lifted his eyes. Angela was one of those children who awake from sleep looking like a dewy rose. Her drowsy eyes were a deeper blue than usual; damp, corn-colored ringlets clung to her white forehead. In her chubby arms she clasped, tenderly, but with determination, the sooty kitten.

The old man looked, and looked again. Then sharply:

"Open that door, Argyll!"

The secretary hastened to throw open the wide front door. The dusky golden light of late afternoon flooded the dingy hall, and glorified the girl with the child in her arms. The old man looked at Angela as if he were drinking her in with a thirst and a hunger that had been with him for long years.

"Argyll," he muttered, "do you see any—any resemblance to—to—"

His voice broke. The secretary put his hand on the old man's shaking arm.

"She's got your grandson's mouth, sir, and—" he said, and paused.

"Yes, yes!" the old man prompted him feverishly. "The eyes—don't you think? Or do I imagine it?"

"You don't imagine it," the secretary responded. "There is no doubt about it, sir—she has her great-grandmother's eyes."

It was at this point that Inspector Ryan's red runabout drew up at the curb behind the Poindexter limousine. The inspector came into the hall, glancing somewhat truculently from Officer Clancy to the group around the carved chair.

"Well, Clancy? Well, Fitz? What's the trouble here?" Then, all at once, he

recognized the tall old man in the carved chair. "Mr. Poindexter! I didn't expect to find you here!" he added, a good deal of the official brusqueness going out of his manner. "This newspaper boy been dragging you into something?"

At the word "newspaper" Peter Poindexter visibly winced. Ryan, catching his expression, hastened to reassure him.

"Young Powers here is all right, sir," he whispered. "Never gives away a thing he's no right to!" Then, aloud: "What's the game, Fitz? From your hurry call I thought Clancy was giving you the third degree."

"Not at all," smiled young Powers. "Officer Clancy and I hit it off fine; but there were a number of points that neither one of us could explain to the other—as, for instance, why Clancy arrested me and Miss Bynner. I can understand that it was a case of orders, but why the orders? Who sent him up here, and why? You see, we've got a story here that Mr. Poindexter is sort of interested in—but there are holes in it. I figured that you were probably the person that could fill them up. What do you know about Mrs. Malone Mackey?"

Some of Ryan's truculence returned to him.

"Who wants to know that? Who's interested?"

For the first time since Ryan's arrival Peter Poindexter spoke.

"I'm interested. I want to know where this Mrs. Mackey is, and her history for the last five years. I shall consider it a personal favor if you can inform me."

Ryan visibly relaxed.

"Ah, that's different! These newspaper boys—"

"This is not my story, Ryan," interposed Fitz-James Powers quietly. "It's Mr. Poindexter's."

Peter Poindexter glanced up quickly from under his gray eyebrows.

"Thank you, my boy. Now, then, Mr. Ryan, about this Mrs. Mackey?"

Ryan took the chair that Clancy placed for him, while Marigold, with Angela in



her arms, sat down on the old horsehair sofa.

"I didn't know this Mrs. Mackey had disappeared until four o'clock this morning, and I probably shouldn't have known it then," said Ryan, "if we hadn't raided a hock-shop run by a man named Ristein. We've had our eye on his place for some time, but we've never really been able to get anything on him until the past week. A week ago he began passing out some mighty good pearls, and on the off chance of getting evidence that he's running a fence we raided the place. Good thing for old Ristein that we did, too! At the minute we broke in, he was being held up in his back room by a crazy dago—"

Marigold made a little sound, and young Powers leaped forward.

"Not a dago, but Spanish—mongrel," he corrected the inspector; "named Jack something."

"Know him?" Ryan lifted his eyebrows at Powers.

"Slightly! Name is Jack—"

"De Sabla," resumed the inspector. "We took 'em both to the station-house. The Sabla fellow was wild, crazy as a loon. In the patrol-wagon he tried to knife old Ristein, and talked. We had no difficulty making him talk—the trouble was to stop him! For two hours he raved. We gathered that there was just one thing he wanted in life—to be revenged on a woman by the name of Mackey for the theft of a string of pearls."

"Of course, we couldn't get any kind of a straight story out of him until he'd blown off just so much; then he settled down to the business of revenge. In an hour he'd spilled everything he knew about this Selma Mackey; and by that time we'd identified her as the wife of Malone Mackey. We checked up his story as near as we could, and decided he was giving it to us straight. In the mean time we'd been up here, found the place apparently deserted, and left Clancy in charge."

"Then you know where Mrs. Mackey is now?"

It was a question that old Mr. Poindexter had been plainly waiting impatiently to ask.

Ryan shook his head.

"She got away from Jack de Sabla, all right; but she'd told him that Ristein had the pearls, and he, knowing it was no use to follow her, had gone straight to the hock-shop with some idea of trying to find out if she was lying to him. That was a bad play for him, as it turned out; but Mrs. Mackey made her getaway. In my opinion this is the last we'll hear from her for some time, unless"—he looked at Peter Poindexter—"unless you want her found."

The old man deliberated for a moment.

"No, there's no use in that. Let her go! What I want to know is what caused her to desert this child the night before last."

"Well, we can just about figure on one thing—she had a reason for not wanting to see either her husband or this Sabla fellow; and here, I think, is the reason. About four years ago the two Mackeys left here and went to Chicago, where they ran a furnished rooming-house. The Sabla fellow knew them from the start up there. He declares that among their patrons was an eccentric, elderly widow, reputed to be wealthy. At any rate she had a lot of jewelry, and among it a string of pearls, which she often told Sabla was worth thirty thousand dollars. Sabla declares—and I figure he was giving it to me straight—that the old lady was taking dope, and stayed at the Mackeys' place occasionally because Malone Mackey got the stuff for her. At any rate, one night she was taken ill there suddenly, and died before morning. Jack de Sabla happened to be there, and he and the Mackeys got into a quarrel over the loot. Sabla declared that Malone Mackey had the necklace, and Mackey accused his wife of having stolen it while he was out of the room telephoning for a doctor. Sabla was wild, because, from what the old lady had promised him, he had come to consider the necklace as good as his. They were

a nice bunch, the lot of them! But three days later, while Sabla was trying to get up courage to give information to the Chicago police, the Mackeys skipped out. They would have succeeded in throwing Sabla off their trail completely, if Malone hadn't been arrested here shortly after for dope-distributing. That bit of news put Jack de Sabla on Malone's trail. All he had to do was to wait until Mackey had served his sentence, and then he followed him to this house. He tells me that he tried several times to get in that evening, but the Mackeys must have seen him first. Finally he hid in an area across the street, and he saw them come out along about two o'clock in the morning. He dodged after them, lost them, and came back to the house to wait. Where they were going he don't know, but he thinks now that they went to Ristein's to dispose of the necklace. I know better, because Ristein admits that a woman of Mrs. Mackey's description brought him that necklace several months ago, which shows that she has been crooked with both of them."

"That's what she and her husband were quarreling about the night before last, when they woke me up!" Marigold exclaimed. "She was protesting, and he was accusing her of having always been a liar."

Ryan nodded grimly.

"And after that she had to take him to old Ristein to prove that she'd got rid of the necklace. She probably figured on getting back before daylight, but something happened to delay her, and when she saw Jack de Sabla watching the house, she was afraid to come home." He turned to Marigold. "You've been here right along, I understand. Did she come home yesterday?"

Marigold related the incidents of Mrs. Mackey's return the night before; but when she got to the finding of the birth certificate, she hesitated, and glanced at Peter Poindexter. The old gentleman roused himself from his thoughts with a sigh.

"This is where I come in," he admitted. "I have every reason to believe that Mrs. Mackey read in yesterday evening's papers of the death of my grandson Richard; and she came back last night to get the most valuable thing she possessed—a birth certificate."

Ryan looked up sharply.

"I see! Blackmail."

"No." Peter Poindexter rose, crossed the hall, and stood looking down at the child in Marigold's arms. His grim old mouth worked a little, but his eyes were triumphant. He stooped and put a tender, possessive hand on Angela's shoulder.

"My grandson married Selma Mackey's sister. He told me so yesterday, before he died. This is my great-granddaughter. There cannot be any question of blackmail, because this child's father begged me to find her; and I—by gad, I'm proud of her!"

With her eyes shining, Marigold touched his hand.

"I'm glad—so glad!" she whispered.

Peter Poindexter was silent for a moment, as if thinking. Then, with a new alertness in his voice and manner, he turned to Ryan.

"You won't have to detain this young lady, Mr. Ryan, I take it?"

Ryan smilingly shook his head.

Ten minutes later, Marigold, looking a little dazed and not so elated as the occasion would seem to warrant, lifted Angela into the Poindexter limousine. From the pavement, hat in hand, with the evening breeze stirring his hair, Fitz-James Powers watched his fellow waif.

Could it be only the night before that she had compared herself to *Cinderella* in the ashes? In twenty-four hours how familiar to him had grown her every gesture, every expression of her face, the changing color of her eyes, each quaint and appealing trick of her head! And now, all at once, she had become inaccessible. The magic wand had touched her, and she was about to vanish forever in the pumpkin coach.

Something painful and unpleasant

seemed to be happening to young Powers's heart. It felt as if it skipped a beat or two and then plunged downward like lead, to keep company with his toes.

Slowly, inexorably, the limousine started away from the curb. It swung out toward the middle of the street, it began to gather speed, and then, suddenly, it stopped. Before the astonished footman could descend and open the door, a shabby and impetuous young lady had jumped out, had sped back to the young man who stood staring on the curb, and had put a hand on his arm.

"To-morrow," she cried breathlessly, "at twelve o'clock I'll be in the little park, on the bench where we sat this morning. Will you be there?"

"Will I?" cried Fitz-James with more fervor than grammar. "Surest thing you know!"

#### XVI

At six minutes before twelve the sparrows in Bryant Park were much annoyed by a restless young man who tramped up and down their favorite walk, disturbing the dinner of crumbs which a kind-hearted old lady had scattered for them. At three minutes before twelve there was not a sparrow in the park that did not hate him; and by noon they had all taken to the lower branches of the trees to wait until this thoughtless human had decided which of the one hundred and seven benches he preferred.

One minute after twelve they saw him start up from a bench, take two steps forward, and then stop, staring as if he had never seen a girl before. The one coming toward him across the park was well worth staring at, as even the indignant sparrows admitted among themselves. She was attired in a delicious shade of fawn-colored cloth, with a little jacket, a crisply plaited skirt, and a wide belt of suède. Her wide hat had a single American Beauty rose on its brim, and the tops of her smart little boots precisely matched the rest of her costume. Young Powers knew perfectly well that this was

Miss Marigold Bynner, but he could scarcely believe his eyes.

That she knew exactly the effect she was producing was quite evident from the happy and self-conscious light in her eyes, and from the way her color mounted the instant she turned into the park from Forty-Second Street. But, making an effort to keep the situation from attracting too much attention from the passers-by, she gave Mr. Powers her hand in a conventional greeting, while under her breath she said:

"For goodness' sake, stop staring in that wild way! What will people think?"

"Can't help it! You dazzle me. May I ask, is this the famous eighty-three-dollar costume?"

"It is. How do you like it?"

"Like it! I never saw anything so pretty as you are in that dress! You've got all the girls on the magazine covers beaten to a finish. You're—"

"That being so," she interrupted, "suppose you let go of my hand, and we'll sit down on one of these benches."

Fitz-James Powers led the way to a bench which he had chosen a few minutes before as being comparatively secluded. Of seclusion there was none, with the ceaseless tide of Forty-Second Street flowing past on their right hand, the elevated railroad roaring in front of them, and noonday loungers flocking from all directions; but young Powers and Marigold Bynner had reached that never-to-be-recaptured moment in life when the brain registers but one thought, the eye sees but one face, and the ear hears but one voice.

"So you really came!" he murmured incredulously.

"Why, of course," she answered softly. "Did you think I could go away without a word, after—after everything?"

"But you're not a waif any longer. You don't need me now."

Her face grew very serious.

"Don't say that—please don't! You said yesterday that we would start afresh, we would turn over a new leaf, and stop

being waifs. Well, we've got our chance now—oh, a fairy tale chance! I don't know where to begin, so I'll tell the best part first. My dear, this morning—

"Wait a minute!" he interrupted her dreamily. "Say that again, will you?"

"This morning—"

"No, no! The other part!"

"What other part? Oh!" She flushed. "Don't be foolish, and don't interrupt. This morning old Mr. Poindexter went to see your newspaper about you. Yes! Wasn't he a brick? No, really—I didn't put him up to it; he took a liking to you yesterday, and made up his mind to find out about you. And he's done it! It was all foolishness, your calling yourself a failure. Over at the office they told Mr. Poindexter you are one of their most promising young men. They say you have a brilliant future before you—"

"They do, do they?" Young Powers growled, trying hard not to show how pleased he was. "It took Peter Poindexter to get that out of them! They wouldn't have given me that much encouragement in a thousand years."

"Now, don't be difficult!" she scolded him appealingly. "Over at the office they said you are brilliant—but you have never taken your work seriously enough. You are too undisciplined; you haven't enough sense of responsibility. Now isn't that true?"

Powers admitted that it was true. Up to this time he had just played around, and his main idea had been to extract as much fun out of life as possible. But now all this was going to be changed. He had ambitions all right; he had ideas to burn, he declared; but he had needed some one to make him focus them. He had needed an incentive, a spur, something to make him realize what was in him. Very earnestly and at great length they talked about ambition, and the day's work, and an aim in life.

"If I—if I thought that you—cared," he said, "I could work my head off! There isn't a fellow in the office of my age that I couldn't beat at the game, if

I was working for you! You do believe that, don't you—Marigold?"

She bent her head.

"I believe it—my dear! You and I had got into a blind alley of discouragement and indifference; and all the while what we needed was just—just—"

"Each other!" His hand crept out and closed over the other hand so near his own on the bench. "You are so dear," he whispered; "so sweet and brave! It will be a long time before I can—before we can—"

"I know!" she returned, smiling back into his eyes. "But I've got to make something of myself, too. You don't want to—to marry a failure, do you?"

"I want to marry *you*," he said, "just as quick as I'm able to make you happy and keep you safe!"

She shook her head whimsically.

"What a deliberate pair we are! Let me see; how long have we known each other?"

"Forty-two hours and"—he looked at his watch—"twenty-five minutes. But that doesn't mean anything. I began to know you well the minute you told me about the dress; and it was just about that time that I began to love you!"

She stroked her fawn-colored skirt.

"Dear dress! Some instinct told me to buy you. But that doesn't mean"—she looked at him shrewdly from the corner of her eye—"that we're ever going to do anything so wild again. No, we're going to be very sensible, and work very, very hard from now on. I've told Mr. and Mrs. Poindexter all about myself—how I've tried and failed, and what I'd like to do—and they want to help me. Oh, my dear, those two old folks! All by themselves in that wonderful house, their grandson gone, and nothing, until last night, to bring them youth and hopefulness! Can you imagine what Angie is going to mean to them, and what they're going to mean to her, poor little waif that she was?"

"It's too good to be put into words!" he responded soberly.



"Last night," Marigold went on, "Mrs. Poindexter sent for me after I had seen Angie put to bed. The old lady had her maid prop her up in bed, and then she asked me all sorts of questions about Angie—what she ate, and what kind of dresses she liked, and if I supposed the child could be taught to love her—pathetic questions, which made me see how hungry she has been, in spite of all she has. And then, finally, she talked about Angie's father. Richard's father was their only son. He died when Richard was a baby, and the old lady thinks that they tried to bring him up too strictly. They loved him so, she said! But he was gay and wild, and he quarreled with his grandfather many times before he was twenty-one. Finally, rumors came to their ears of his marriage to the daughter of a man who kept a road-house. When his grandfather accused him of it, Richard refused to discuss the matter at all, which led up to the worst quarrel they had ever had, and in the end his grandfather turned him out of the house for good and all. They heard of his adventures and exploits from time to time, and finally learned that he had joined one of the aviation corps abroad. About a month ago they had a letter saying that he was ill in a French hospital. Old Mr. Poindexter went over and brought him home. The thing that consoles them both now is the way he turned to them at the end. He told them everything there was to tell about his marriage with Mary Jerome, and begged them to find his child."

"But what I can't understand," interposed Fitz-James, "is his neglecting his child so long. Must have been a queer sort of chap!"

"His grandmother says that no one ever quite understood him—except at the end, when it was too late. He loved Mary Jerome. She was probably the only person he had ever loved in his whole selfish, undisciplined life; and when she died he must have gone wild. He told his grand-

mother that he hated the child, because it had cost him Mary's life. He never wanted to see it or hear of it again, and he handed it over to Selma Mackey, its aunt. Immediately after Mary's death he went abroad. For two years he tried to lose himself and forget in out-of-the-way corners of the world; but he never quite succeeded. He told his grandmother that in the midst of all his adventures he had never been able to forget that he had deserted Mary's child, and he meant, if he lived through the war, to come back to America and find her."

Between the two on the bench there fell a silence so prolonged that a half-dozen of the boldest spirits among the sparrows fluttered down and went on about their affairs within two feet of Marigold's skirt.

"I suppose," said Fitz-James Powers, after a while, "that you'll never go back to No. 93 again?"

"I said good-by to it this morning. Mrs. Poindexter sent her maid down with me, and we took away my things. And do you know, I could almost have cried, the old house seemed so forlorn! I thought of all the queer, unreal weeks I had lived there, and the things I had imagined about the place, and how miserable I had been there—and how happy! And then I ran back up-stairs to my dreadful little room, and I—I patted my old bureau good-by!"

"Funny little thing!" murmured Powers tenderly.

"Funny, maybe," she replied. "But when I was a waif in that old house it told me stories, and finally, one evening, it brought me the most wonderful thing that can happen in this world. Don't you understand how I feel about it?"

Fitz-James Powers took her hand and held it close.

"Of course, I understand," he said. "And some day, when we're so happy that we can't contain ourselves, we'll go back there and walk past, just to tell the old house we're not waifs any longer!"